Plutarch in the Religious and Philosophical Discourse of Late Antiquity

Ancient Mediterranean and Medieval Texts and Contexts

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Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition

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Plutarch in the Religious and Philosophical Discourse of Late Antiquity

Edited by

Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta
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BRILL

LEIDEN · BOSTON
2012

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Plutarch in the religious and philosophical discourse of late antiquity / edited by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, Israel Muñoz Gallarte.
pages. cm. – (Ancient Mediterranean and medieval texts and contexts ; volume 14)
Papers from the XI Congress of the International Plutarch Society held June 2010.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-90-04-23474-1 (hardback : alk. paper) – ISBN 978-90-04-23685-1 (e-book)
1. Plutarch–Congresses. 2. Philosophy, Ancient–Congresses. I. Roig Lanzillotta, Lautaro. II. Muñoz Gallarte, Israel. III. International Plutarch Society. IV. Series: Ancient Mediterranean and medieval texts and contexts ; v. 14.

PA4382.P59 2013
184–dc23

2012032857

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual "Brill" typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1871-188X
ISBN 978-90-04-23474-1 (hardback)
ISBN 978-90-04-23685-1 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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PREFACE

This book includes the reworked versions of the papers presented at the *XI Congress of the International Plutarch Society* (section: Réseau Thématique Plutarque): "Plutarch in the Religious and Philosophical Discourse of Late Antiquity", which I had the pleasure to organize, together with Dr Israel Muñoz Gallarte, at the University of Groningen's Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies from June 2–5, 2010. It includes fifteen papers by renowned European scholars: six papers focus on philosophical matters and the other nine on religious issues.

The Department of Jewish, Christian and Islamic Origins, in which I work as senior Lecturer in New Testament and Early Christian Studies, pays special attention to the cultural environment (social, philosophical, religious, political and historical contexts) in which ancient writings were produced and consumed. Given the time span that separates us from the first centuries of late antiquity and our ignorance about numerous aspects of the multicultural society in which writers and readers lived, reconstructing the cultural environment in which and for which texts were composed appears to be an essential part of the development of exegetes' interpretations. The testimony of insiders and external observers is precious for this reconstruction.

The works of Plutarch, notably his *Moralia* but also his *Lives*, provide us with exceptional evidence, since they cover both perspectives. As to the former, as a priest of Apollo at Delphi he witnessed pagan religion and ancient religious experience; as a Middle Platonist he was also actively involved in the developments of the philosophical school and provided unique testimony for conceptual issues that would only achieve definitive form in Plotinus and Neoplatonism. As to the latter, Plutarch was a sensitive chronicler of events he experienced in a less direct manner and often provided a more detached point of view about the numerous religious practices and currents that permeated the building of ancient pagan religion and the philosophical views of other schools. The conference aimed to take advantage of Plutarch's privileged position as an observer of the philosophical and religious worlds of late antiquity to assess a number of issues that are relevant for the reconstruction of the cultural atmosphere of the first centuries of the era.

As far as the philosophical world is concerned, the essays in this book assess Plutarch's testimony to Aristotle's influence on Middle Platonism (A.P. Bos, Amsterdam), Plutarch's position within Middle Platonism as viewed through a comparison between his own conceptions of the passions and those of Posidonius and Galen (F. Becchi, Florence) and his testimony regarding the controversy between the Stoa and the Middle Academy (Raúl Caballero, Malaga). Pagan monotheism from the Middle Platonic perspective (F. Brenk, Rome), the relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades in later Platonic tradition (G. Roskam, Leuven) and Michael Psellus' use of Plutarch's *Quaestiones naturales* (M. Meeusen, Leuven) complete the section.

As for the religious world, the section opens with an evaluation of Plutarch's testimony about the procession of Iacchus from Athens to Eleusis, with a view to determining whether the name Iacchus refers to Dionysus or to a different deity (A. Jiménez, Madrid). Plutarch's idea of god, in turn, is established by an analysis of his views on Herodotus' religiosity and the Middle Platonic arguments used to assess it (L. Roig Lanzillotta, Groningen). A review of Plutarch's experience as a priest of Apollo (A. Casanova, Florence) completes the study of his theological views. Popular religiosity is the focus of two studies: Plutarch's views regarding astral biology (A. Pérez Jiménez, Malaga) and the analysis of ancient beliefs about the evil eye, which N. Valletta called "jettatura" (P. Volpe Cacciatore, Salerno). The relationship between religion and politics as reflected by the Eleusinian Mysteries comes to the fore in Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades* (D. Leão, Coimbra), while an analysis of fr. 157 Sandbach argues that the view of a "mystery-like theology" provides a comprehensive vision of physical and metaphysical realities (R. Scannapieco, Salerno). An analysis of the term *pistis* in Plutarch argues that *fideistic* interpretations need to be revised (G. van Kooten, Groningen) and a comparison of the colors of the soul both in Plutarch and the apocryphal *Acts of John* (Israel Muñoz Gallarte, Groningen) closes the book.

This conference would not have been possible without the close collaboration of my friend and colleague Dr Israel Muñoz Gallarte. After our first enthusiastic conversations in Seville, he provided the necessary impetus to our plans in Paris, which ultimately led to their crystallization in Groningen. His role was crucial both in the preliminary contacts with the members of the "Réseau" and in organizing the Groningen meeting.

Many people actively contributed to the organization of this conference. The dean of our faculty, Prof. G. van Kooten, lent his complete support to the organization, and the GUF (*Groninger Universiteits Fonds*) and the Faculty

of Theology and Religious Studies kindly provided the necessary financial support for the event. Special thanks are also owed to M. Wubbolts and Mirjam Buigel, whose help and experience ensured the successful organization of the conference.

Different persons read the manuscript at different stages and enriched it with numerous corrections and suggestions. Especial thanks are due to Louke Boulens, Julia Harvey for her continuous support and to my dear and erudite friend Alasdair A. MacDonald.

ABBREVIATIONS

Journal Abbreviations

AC	L'Antiquité classique (Bruxelles)
AClass	Acta classica: verhandelinge van die Klassieke Vereniging van Suid-Afrika (Pretoria)
Aevum	Aevum: rassegna di scienze storiche, linguistiche e filologiche (Milan)
AJPh	American Journal of Philology (Baltimore, Md.)
AncPhil	Ancient Philosophy (Pittsburgh, Pa.)
AncSoc	Ancient Society (Leuven)
Arete	Arete: The Undergraduate Philosophy Journal of Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ)
Athenaeum	Athenaeum: Studi di letteratura e storia dell'antichità (Como)
BICS	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies (London)
CJ	The Classical Journal (Ashland, Va.)
CPh	Classical Philology: a Journal Devoted to Research in Classical Antiquity (Chicago, Ill.)
CQ	Classical Quarterly (Oxford)
CR	Classical Review (Oxford)
DHA	Dialogues d'histoire ancienne. Besançon: Pr. Universitaires de Franche-Comté (Paris)
DhG	Das humanistische Gymnasium: Zeitschrift des deutschen Gymnasialvereins (Heidelberg)
Didaskalos	Didaskalos: The Journal of the Joint Association of Classical Teachers (Oxford)
Elenchos	Elenchos: rivista di studi sul pensiero antico (Naples)
Epoché	Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy (Charlottesville, Vi.)
E&W	East and West: a Quarterly Published by the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (Rome)
Glotta	Zeitschrift für griechische und lateinische Sprache (Göttingen)
GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies (Durham, N.C.)
Hermathena	Hermathena: a Trinity College Dublin Review (Dublin)
Hermes	Hermes: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie (Stuttgart)
Historia	Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte (Stuttgart)
HRel	Historia religionum. An International Journal (Pisa–Rome)
HSCPh	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology (Cambridge, MA.)
ICS	Illinois Classical Studies (Champaign, Ill.)
IPQ	International Philosophical Quarterly (Bronx, N.Y.)
JbAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum (Münster)
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature (Atlanta, Ga.)
JEA	The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (London)
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies: Journal of the North American Patristics Society (Baltimore, Md.)

JHPh	Journal of the History of Philosophy (Atlanta, Ga.)
JThS	The Journal of Theological Studies (Oxford)
KantStud	Kant-Studien: Philosophische Zeitschrift der Kant-Gesellschaft (Berlin)
LÉC	Les études classiques (Namur)
Lexis	Lexis: poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica (Amsterdam)
MH	Museum Helveticum. Schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft (Basel)
Mnemosyne	Mnemosyne: bibliotheca classica Batava (Leiden)
ModSch	The Modern Schoolman: a Quarterly Journal of Philosophy (Saint Louis, Mo.)
NTS	New Testament Studies: Journal of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (Cambridge)
Numen	Numen: International Review for the History of Religions (Leiden)
NZThR	Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie (Berlin)
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica (Leuven)
OSAPh	Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy (Oxford)
Pallas	Pallas: Revue d'études antiques (Toulouse)
Philologus	Philologus: Zeitschrift für antike Literatur und ihre Rezeption (Berlin)
PhR	Philosophische Rundschau: eine Zeitschrift für philosophische Kritik (Tübingen)
PhW	Berliner philologische Wochenschrift (Berlin)
Phronesis	Phronesis: a Journal for Ancient Philosophy (Leiden)
REA	Revue des études anciennes (Pessac)
REG	Revue des études grecques (Paris)
RhM	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie (Frankfurt am Main)
RMM	Revue de métaphysique et de morale (Paris)
RPhilos	Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger (Paris)
Saeculum	Saeculum: Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte (Freiburg im Breisgau)
StudPhilon	The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism (Atlanta, Ga.)
Talanta	Τάλαντα: Proceedings of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society (Amsterdam)
TAPhA	Transactions of the American Philological Association (Baltimore, Md.)
Th&Ph	Theologie und Philosophie (Freiburg im Breisgau)
ThR	Theologische Rundschau (Tübingen)
WS	Wiener Studien: Zeitschrift für Klassische Philologie, Patristik und lateinische Tradition (Wien)
ZNTW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche (Berlin)
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik (Bonn)

Other Abbreviations

CH	Nock, A.D. & Festugière, A.J., *Corpus Hermeticum*, 4 vols. (Paris 1945–1954).
DK	Diels, H. & Kranz, W., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker griechisch und deutsch* (Berlin 1903).
IG	Inscriptiones graecae (Berlin).
LCL	Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge).
LSJ	Liddell, H.G. – Scott, R. & Jones, H.S., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1961).
NHC	Robinson, J.M. (ed.), *The Coptic Gnostic Library: a Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Leiden 2000).
NTA	Schneemelcher, W. (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha* (Engl. transl. ed. by R. McL. Wilson; Cambridge–Louisville 2003).
RE	Pauly, A. – Wissowa, G. & Kroll, W. et al. (eds), *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart–Munich 1893–1983).
SVF	Von Arnim, H., *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (Leipzig 1964 [1903–1924]).

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INTRODUCTION

PLUTARCH AT THE CROSSROADS OF RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta

Plutarch of Chaeronea, who was born to a wealthy family in 45 CE, received the best education at home and abroad. He frequently traveled to Rome,[1] Alexandria and Athens;[2] while in Athens he probably attended the lectures of Ammonius,[3] who influenced his adoption of Platonism.[4] However, he spent most of his life in his hometown of Chaeronea, where he later founded a sort of philosophical school or academy in which family, friends and pupils could meet and discuss philosophical issues. Due to his social provenance and education, he developed a rich political career[5] and social life in which he was acquainted with most of the prominent political and cultural figures of the period.[6] He is therefore a first-rate witness to the cultural life of late antiquity.

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[1] See C.P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford 1971) and S.C.R. Swain, "Plutarch, Plato, Athens, and Rome", in J. Barnes & M. Griffith (eds), *Philosophia Togata*, II: *Plato and Aristotle at Rome* (Oxford 1997) 165–187.

[2] K. Ziegler, "Plutarchos", *RE*, XXI (1951) 636–962 at 653–657 in his overview of Plutarch's travels, he points out (653) that his testimony is essential for our knowledge of the history and topography of ancient Athens.

[3] See Plu., *De E* 385B; 387F; C.P. Jones, "The Teacher of Plutarch", *HSCPh* 71 (1967) 205–213; J. Whittaker, "Ammonius on the Delphic E", *CQ* 19 (1969) 185–192; H. Dörrie, "Die Stellung Plutarchs im Platonismus seiner Zeit", in R.B. Palmer & R. Hammerton-Kelly (eds), *Philomathes. Studies and Essays in the Humanities in Memory of Philip Merlan* (The Hague 1971) 36–56; P. Moraux, *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen*, I (Berlin-New York 1973) 18–28; J.M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaka 1996 [1977]) 189–192; R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* (Paris 1989) 164–165; B. Puech, "Prosopographie des amis de Plutarque", *ANRW* II 33.6 (1992) 4831–4893 at 4831–4893.

[4] However, Plutarch seems to have left the Academy rather early, which H. Dörrie, "Der Platonismus in der Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte der frühen Kaisezeit", in *Platonica minora* (Munich 1976) 166–210 at 183, traces back to Plutarch's fundamental disagreement with some of the main tenets of Platonism, such as his literal reading of the *Timaeus* which implied his view that the cosmos was created after time, on which C. Froidefrond commented, "Plutarque et le Platonisme", *ANRW* II.36.1 (1987) 184–243 at 189–197. See further Dörrie, "Die Stellung Plutarchs", 36–56.

[5] Ziegler, "Plutarchos", 657–659.

[6] Ziegler, "Plutarchos", 666–696 and Puech, "Prosopographie des amis de Plutarque", 4831–4893.

1. *Plutarch and the Philosophical Discourse*

Plutarch's testimony is essential to reconstructing and understanding the philosophical and religious worlds of late antiquity. Even if he is not always cherished as a philosopher by his readers,[7] Plutarch plays a key role in the history of ancient philosophy, both as an active part of the philosophical discussion taking place in his time and as a more detached observer of other important events. In fact, he is credited as the most important Middle Platonist author,[8] not only for the bulk of his philosophical production—more than half of his recorded works in the Catalogue of Lamprias are devoted to philosophical matters—but also for the extensive influence he exerted on both Middle and Neoplatonic authors. The copious quotes or allusions to his person and work in antiquity bear witness to his central importance in the philosophical map of antiquity: Neopythagoreans, Middle Platonists, Neoplatonists and Christians alike frequently appealed to his authority.[9]

Plutarch's works are enormously important to the history of ancient philosophy. First, his testimony is essential to understanding the development of Platonism in the first centuries of the era. Indeed, his relationship with the Academy, his version of Platonism, his role in Middle Platonism, his contribution to or his evidence regarding the formation of the typically Middle

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[7] This is valid for both his ancient and modern readers. Thus, for example, Neoplatonists such as Proclus who were scandalized by his view of the origins of the cosmos, mostly viewed Plutarch as an historian, and in this line, Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* describes him as "a litterateur and antiquarian". See *contra*, F. Brenk, "An Imperial Heritage: The Religious Spirit of Plutarch", *ANRW* II.36.1 (1987) 248–349; and Froidefond, "Plutarque et le Platonisme", 233. A middle point may be found in Dörrie, "Der Platonismus", 184, which distinguishes the ancient from the modern perception of the sense in which Plutarch's work may be called "philosophical". While from a modern perspective only the treatises against Epicureans and Stoics are philosophical, from an ancient perspective almost every work of his literary production might be considered philosophical: "Im antiken Sinne is freilich alles philosophisch, was Plutarch aufzeichnete—philosophisch darum, weil aus den zahlreichen einzelnen Beobachtungen, die sich auf Phänomene der Natur und der Literatur beziehen, wieder und wieder Schlüsse auf das hinter ihnen Verborgene gezogen werden, etc". See in this volume the chapter by G. Roskam, 85–100, esp. 98–99.

[8] M. Baltes, "Plutarch of Chaeronea. III. Philosophical Work. A. Education", in "Plutarchus", *Brill's New Pauly*. Antiquity volumes edited by: Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider. Brill Online, 2012. Reference. University of Groningen. 24 May 2012 http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/plutarchus-e928690.

[9] R. Hirzel, *Plutarch* (Leipzig 1912) is still the best study on Plutarch's reception; Ziegler, "Plutarchos", 947–962; for the influence of his ethical and theological writings on early Christianity, see H.D. Betz (ed.), *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden 1975) and idem (ed.), *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden 1978).

Platonic lore as a prelude to Neoplatonism[10] and his participation from a Platonic perspective in the interschool philosophical polemics of the time are all precious elements both for the reconstruction of Middle Platonism as such and for the assessment of its relationship with the other philosophical schools. The marked religious character of his approach to philosophy, which he shares with numerous Middle Platonists, has also helped scholars to better understand the characteristic confluence of religion and philosophy in the first centuries of the era.[11]

But his philosophical interests went far beyond the strict borders of his school; he observed many other philosophical groups. As is also the case with other Middle Platonists, Aristotle enjoys a special status in the work of Plutarch, who also addressed the Presocratics,[12] Socrates,[13] Cyrenaeans, Stoa[14] and Epicureanism,[15] usually providing exceptional or unique echoes

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[10] R.M. Jones, *The Platonism of Plutarch* (Menasha 1916); H. Dörrie, "Le platonisme de Plutarque", in *Actes du VIIIe Congrès de l'Association Guillaume Budé, Paris, 5–10 avril 1968* (Paris 1969) 519–530; idem, "Die Stellung Plutarchs im Platonismus"; Froidefond, "Plutarque et le platonisme"; D. Tsekourakis, "Pythagoreanism or Platonism and Ancient Medicine? The Reasons for Vegetarianism in Plutarch's Moralia", *ANRW* II.36.1 (1987) 366–393; P.L. Donini, "Science and Metaphysics: Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism in Plutarch's *On the Face in the Moon*", in J.M. Dillon & A.A. Long (eds), *The Question of Eclecticism* (Berkeley–Los Angeles 1988) 15–33; idem, "Plutarco e la rinascita del platonismo", in G. Cambiano – L. Canfora & D. Lanza, *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica* I.3 (Rome 1994) 35–60; idem, "L'eredità accademica e I fondamenti del platonismo in Plutarco", in M. Barbanti – G. Giardina & P. Manganaro, *Henosis kai Philia. Unione e amicizia. Ommagio a Francesco Romano* (Catania 2003) 247–273; J. Opsomer, *In Search of the Truth: Academic Tendencies in Middle Platonism* (Brussels 1998); idem, "The Place of Plutarch in the History of Platonism", in P. Volpe Cacciatore & F. Ferrari (eds), *Plutarco e la cultura della sua età. Atti del X Convegno plutarcheo, Fisciano–Paestum, 27–29 ottobre 2005* (Naples 2007) 281–310.

[11] On Plutarch's characteristic mixture of philosophy and religion, see Jones, *The Platonism of Plutarch*, 23; R. Flacelière, "Plutarque et la Pythie", *REG* 56 (1943) 72–111 at 110–111; D. Babut, *Plutarque et le stoïcisme* (Paris 1969) 368; F.E. Brenk, "From Mysticism to Mysticism. The Religious Development of Plutarchus of Chaeronea", *SBL Seminar Papers* 1 (1975) 193–198.

[12] Eus., *PE* 1.8.1–12, attributes Plutarch a *florilegium* of philosophers, from which he extracts his overview of Presocratics such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Democritus, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea and others. See Ziegler, "Plutarchos", 768.

[13] J. Opsomer, *Searchers of the Truth* (Leuven 1999) 127–162.

[14] Plutarch wrote, according to Ziegler, "Plutarchos", 753–761, eight or nine specific treatises against the Stoics, of which two are preserved completely (*De Stoic. repugn.* and *Adv. Stoic.*), although criticism against the Stoa can be found *passim*. See J.P. Hershbell, "Plutarch and Stoicism", *ANRW* II.36.5 (1992) 3336–3352.

[15] Also, Plutarch seems to have written eight treatises against Epicureans, of which only three are preserved (*Adv. Col.*, *Non poss.*, *An recte dictum*); Ziegler, "Plutarchos", 761–767; See Hershbell, "Plutarch and Epicureanism", 3353–3383.

of theories and viewpoints. His testimony has been essential for the transmission of innumerable fragments from the Stoics and Epicurus.[16]

Take for example the character, development and influence of Aristotelian philosophy in antiquity. On the level of detail and anecdote, for example, Plutarch's *Life of Sulla*[17] includes the probably legendary story,[18] also recorded in slightly different terms by Strabo,[19] of how the manuscripts of the *Corpus aristotelicum* ended up in a cellar in the city of Scepsis. For centuries, this story provided a plausible explanation for the decline of the Lyceum after Aristotle's death, which was already noticed in antiquity.[20] According to this story, the books were first inherited by Theophrastus and then bequeathed to Neleus of Scepsis, who took them from Athens to Scepsis when he returned to his native city. The books were gravely damaged in Scepsis because Neleus' descendants—careless and illiterate people, according to Plutarch—apparently hid them in a cellar to keep them from being taken to Pergamum Library, and they remained there for around two centuries.

Even if apocryphal, for centuries this story also explained the revival of Aristotelianism in the first centuries CE. Plutarch described how Sulla, who arrived at Piraeus in 86 BC, seized the library of the recently dead Apellicon of Teos[21]—who had since acquired the *Corpus aristotelicum*—and took it to Rome. It is here that the renowned grammarian Tyrannion of Amisus finally repaired and edited the books and apparently provided copies to Andronicos of Rhodos, on the basis of which this philosopher prepared an edition of Aristotle's works around 60 BC.[22]

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[16] A quick look to the major editions of both Stoics and Epicurus immediately reveals that Plutarch's writings were a major source for the fragments of the philosophers.

[17] Plu., *Sulla* 26.

[18] See H.B. Gottschalk, "Notes on the Wills of the Peripatetic Scholarchs", *Hermes* 100 (1972) 314–342.

[19] See Str. 13.68.

[20] As commented upon by Cic., *De fin.* 5.5.13; *Tusc.* 4.5.9.

[21] See I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Göteborg 1957) 375, 382; Gottschalk, "Notes on the Wills", 335–342; Moraux, *Der Aristotelismus* I, 18; H.B. Gottschalk, "Aristotelian Philosophy in the Roman World from the time of Cicero to the End of the Second Century", *ANRW* II.36.1 (1987) 1079–1174 at 1083–1087; and more recently H. Lindsay, "Strabo on Apellicon's Library", *RhM* 140 (1997) 290–298.

[22] On this issue, see the thorough analysis of Moraux, *Der Aristotelismus* I, 1–94, who compares the testimonies of Strabo and Plutarch and critically analyzes the contents of their information and, more recently, Gottschalk, "Aristotelian Philosophy", 1083–1097.

On a more fundamental level, however, Plutarch's oeuvre as a whole is especially valuable for the assessment of the general character of Aristotelian philosophy in antiquity and for particular inquiries about some of the numerous aspects of Aristotle's thought that remain obscure.[23] As has been pointed out, the fact that Plutarch was deeply interested in Aristotle is obvious because up to four titles of his works in the Catalogue of Lamprias are concerned with Aristotelian philosophy.[24] However, as in the cases of the Stoics and Epicureans, not only specific works but the whole Plutarchean *corpus* provides testimony of this interest. Admittedly, the last quarter of the twentieth century saw some attempts to qualify Plutarch's knowledge of Aristotle as "indirect". Since, excluding some exoteric works, Plutarch rarely quotes the philosopher, some scholars affirmed that he may have only known Aristotle through intermediate works.[25] Recent years have seen a renewed assessment of Plutarch's wide and direct knowledge of Aristotle's exoteric and esoteric works.[26]

One of these scholars is A.P. Bos, whose study in the present volume, "Plutarch on the Sleeping Soul and the Waking Intellect and Aristotle's Double Entelechy Concept", affirms that Plutarch's *corpus* allows us to assess the extensive influence of Aristotle's published and unpublished writings.[27] In this study and in other previous works,[28] Bos also asserts that Plutarch's

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[23] See G. Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry* (Oxford 2006) chapter 2 "Plutarch".

[24] The titles of these works are *Lecture on the Ten Categories* (n. 192), *Aristotle's Topics* (n. 56), *On the Fifth Substance* (n. 44) and *On Theophrastus'* Πρὸς τοὺς καιροὺς πολιτικά (n. 52–53). However, the existence of the second and third treatises has been challenged by E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, III 2, 180 note 1; F.H. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia*, XV (London–Cambridge 1969), 6–12 ; idem, "Plutarch and Aristotle", *ICS* 7 (1982) 207–232 at 212. See, on this issue, Gottschalk, "Aristotelian Philosophy", 1146–1147.

[25] See Düring, *Aristotle*, 354–355; Sandbach, "Plutarch and Aristotle"; P.L. Donini, *Tre studi sull'Aristotelismo nel II secolo D.C.* (Turin 1974) 64–80; idem, "Lo scetticismo accademico, Aristotele e l'unità della tradizione platonica secondo Plutarco", in G. Cambiano (ed.), *Storiografia endossografia nella filosofia antica* (Turin 1986) 214–216. *Contra* see Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle*, 90.

[26] See Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle*, chapter 2.

[27] See below, this volume, 25–42. See also C. Santaniello, "Traces of the Lost Aristotle in Plutarch", in A. Pérez Jiménez et al., *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles* (Madrid 1999), 629–641. Also see the studies by A.P. Bos mentioned in notes 28 and 29.

[28] See, for example, A.P. Bos, "Plutarch's Testimony to an Earlier Explanation of Aristotle's Definition of the Soul", in Pérez Jiménez et al., *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles*, 535–548; A.P. Bos, "The Distinction between 'Platonic' and 'Aristotelian' Dualism, Illustrated from Plutarch's Myth in *De facie quae in orbe lunae apparet*", in A. Pérez Jiménez & F. Casadesús Bordoy (eds), *Estudios sobre Plutarco. Misticismo y Religiones Místericas en la Obra de Plutarco* (Madrid-Malaga 2001) 57–70.

testimony is essential to disproving the developmental view of Aristotle's thought that reigned in the twentieth century due to the influence of W. Jaeger and F.J.C.J. Nuyens.[29] As a matter of fact, Plutarch affirms the fundamental unity of Aristotle's published and unpublished works, showing[30] that there was no contradiction or opposition between the views Aristotle explored in dialogues such as the *Eudemus*, *Protrepticos* or *On Philosophy* and the theories he more systematically exposed in the lectures contained in the *corpus*. The analysis of particular Aristotelian echoes in the works of Plutarch provides enough material to support this view.

This is particularly the case in Bos' revision and redefinition of Aristotle's definition of the soul. Taking the myth of a "dreaming Kronos" at the end of Plutarch's *De facie*[31] as a starting point, Bos engages in a far-reaching analysis of Aristotle's view of the soul as a double entelechy.[32] After reviewing Aristotle's famous definition of the soul as the "first entelechy of a natural body which potentially possesses life and is *organikon*", Bos shows that the "natural body" is nothing but the vital heat, which Aristotle frequently referred to in a variety of ways, and that it serves the soul as an instrument for its typical psychical functions.[33] The term *organikon* in the quoted definition should therefore not be translated as "equipped with organs" but rather as "serving as an instrument", a translation for which an interesting passage of Plutarch's *Platonic Questions* also provides good support.[34]

In order to explain in which way the soul is the entelechy of this natural body, Bos launches a full analysis of the double sense with which "entelechy" is used in *On the Soul* 2.1, which shows that Aristotle conceived of the soul as an entelechy in a double way: when described as "asleep" the soul is seen as forming a unity with its instrumental natural body; when the intellect is referred to as "waking entelechy" it is because it is free of any bodily covering. This is the reason why it can be compared to the sailor who, after arriving in a safe harbor, no longer needs his ship. These Aristotelian views, which are generally traceable in Middle Platonic authors such as Philo

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[29] On the developmental interpretation due to both scholars, see A.P. Bos, *The Soul and its Instrumental Body. A Reinterpretation of Aristotle's Philosophy of Living Nature* (Leiden 2003) 13–17 and 17–20, respectively.

[30] Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle*, 92 n. 27, rightly affirms that Plutarch's distinction between esoteric and exoteric works in *Vita Alexandri* 6 does testify to his knowledge of Aristotle's work as a whole.

[31] Plu., *De fac*. 941F.

[32] See A.P. Bos, *Cosmic and Meta-Cosmic Theology in Aristotle's Lost Dialogues* (Leiden 1989) 16–20 and idem, *The Soul*, 224, 331, 345.

[33] See A.P. Bos, "Plutarch on the Sleeping Soul", 30–38.

[34] See Plu., *Qu. Plat*. 8, 1006D, with Bos, "Plutarch's Testimony", 536.

or Alcinous,[35] are notably present in Plutarch and influenced his double theology, his view of a twofold death, the pneumatic vehicle of the soul and, especially, the notion of the Sleeping (World) Soul,[36] which clearly echoes the conception of a sleeping and waking soul.[37]

Plutarch also interacted with the Stoa, especially about ethics, one of his beloved subjects.[38] A quick look at the works included in *Moralia* clearly shows that of all the philosophical disciplines, ethics was the most cherished by Plutarch[39] and the name of the *corpus* already points to its mainly ethical character. However, scholars have recently stressed the importance of ethics in the *Lives* as well.[40] Despite the centrality of ethics in Plutarch's oeuvre, it is only after K. Ziegler's study[41] that it began to receive special attention.[42] Indeed, the last years have seen a renewed interest in his ethical works.[43]

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[35] See, for example, Philo, *De opif. mund*. 16–25; *Abr*. 60–72 with A.P. Bos, "Philo of Alexandria a Platonist in the Image and Likeness of Aristotle", *StudPhilon* 10 (1998) 66–86; Alcinous, *Didask*. 162.24–166.14 with Bos, "Plutarch on the Sleeping Soul", 39–41.

[36] Plu., *De fac*. 940F; *De an. procr*. 1026E–F.

[37] Bos, "Plutarch on the Sleeping Soul", 39–40.

[38] See an overview in Ziegler, "Plutarchos", 768–803. In any case, 74 of the 227 works of the Lamprias catalogue are concerned with ethical issues.

[39] M. Baltes, "Plutarch of Chaeronea. III Philosophical Work", in "Plutarchus". See L. van Hoof, *Plutarch's Practical Ethics* (Oxford 2010) Published on Oxford Scholarship Online: September 2010. http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199583263.001.0001/acprof-9780199583263.

[40] For the importance of morality in the *Lives*, see F. Frazier, *Histoire et morale dans les Vies parallèles de Plutarque* (Paris 1996); C. Pelling, "The Moralism of Plutarch's Lives", in D. Innes – H. Hine & C. Pelling (eds), *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for D. Russell on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Oxford 1995) 205–220, [repr. in C. Pelling (ed.), *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (London 2002) 237–251]; T.E. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford 1999).

[41] See Ziegler, "Plutarchos", 636–637 under "popular philosophisch-ethische Schriften". Against this label due to Plutarch's expected readership, see van Hoof, *Plutarch's Practical Ethics*, 11; see also C. Pelling, "What is Popular about Plutarch's 'Popular Philosophy'?", in G. Roskam & L. Van der Stockt (eds), *Virtues for the People: Aspects of Plutarchan Ethics. Plutarchea hypomnemata* (Leuven 2011) 41–58.

[42] See, in general, Jones, *Plutarch and Rome*; D.A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London 1973); J. Boulogne, *Plutarque: Un aristocrate grec sous l'occupation romaine* (Lille 1994); and J. Sirinelli, *Plutarque de Chéronée* (Paris 2000). See H.G. Ingenkamp, *Plutarchs Schriften über die Heilung der Seele* (Bonn 1971) on Plutarch's *On the Control of Anger*, *On Talkativeness*, *On Curiosity*, *On Compliancy*, and *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively*; and D. Tsekourakis, *Οἱ Λαικοφιλοσοφικές πραγματεῖες τοῦ Πλουτάρχου. Ἡ σχέση τους μὲ τὴ διατριβὴ καὶ μὲ ἄλλα παραπλήσια γραμματειακὰ εἴδη* (Thessaloniki 1983); L. Van der Stockt, "Aspects of the Ethics and Poetics of the Dialogue in the Corpus Plutarcheum", in I. Gallo & C. Moreschini (eds), *I generi letterari in Plutarco. Atti del VIII Convegno plutarcheo, Pisa, 2–4 giugno 1999* (Naples 2000) 93–116.

[43] Van Hoof, *Plutarch's Practical Ethics*; See, in general, the whole volume published by Roskam and Van der Stock, *Virtues for the People*, but especially the introduction by

In ethics, Plutarch's point of departure is clearly Platonic-Aristotelian. To begin with, he generally endorsed Plato's view of the soul, exposed in the *Republic* and the *Timaeus* as consisting of rational, spirited and passionate parts. However, Plutarch more closely followed Aristotle's philosophy in allotting the two latter parts to an irrational part that resulted in the bipartition into rational and irrational halves.[44] His view of the passions, consequently, was also clearly Platonic-Aristotelian, since he conceived of them as arising in the irrational part of the soul when rationality appears to have lost control of the soul complex. *On Moral Virtue*, for example, he even distinguishes between practical and theoretical virtue on the basis that the former exclusively deals with the irrational part of the soul and with taming emotions. This, of course, implies his view of the passions as important contributors to the *tonus* of the soul and of *metriopatheia* as the only way to deal with passions in a proper way.[45] In *On Moral Virtue*, Plutarch frequently referred to Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* in order to assess his view of virtue as a *mesotes*.[46]

Admittedly, his position is sometimes far from clear, often due to Plutarch's active involvement in the philosophical discussions of his time: sometimes Plutarch purposefully used Stoic terminology to turn it polemically against them; other times, the lack of clarity results from the tradition he is following, be it Stoic, Cynic or other. It is precisely this difficulty that Angelo Becchi's article on Plutarchean ethics, "The Doctrine of the Passions: Plutarch, Posidonius and Galen", intends to tackle. As a scholar with a profound knowledge of Plutarch's ethics, to which he has devoted numerous studies,[47] Becchi attempts to determine Plutarch's position on ethics more

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G. Roskam & L. Van der Stock, "Efficiency and Effectiveness in Plutarch's Broadcasting Ethics", 7–16 and the papers by L. van Hoof, "Plutarch's Diet Ethics Precepts of Healthcare Between Diet and Ethics", 109–132; H.M. Martin, "Plutarch's Morality: Arete Tyche and Non-Consequentialism", 133–150; J. Opsomer, "Virtue, Fortune and Happiness in Theory and Practice", 151–174; and A.G. Nikolaidis, "Plutarch's 'Minor Ethics': Some Remarks on *De Garrulitate*, *De Curiositate*, and *De Vitioso Pudore*", 205–222.

[44] See, for example, Plu., *Qu. Plat.* 9, 1007E; *De virt. mor.* 442A.

[45] Plu., *De virt. mor.* 451B.

[46] Plu., *De virt. mor.* 444C–445A. See, in general, Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 192–198.

[47] See, for example, F. Becchi, *Plutarco, La virtù etica* (Naples 1999); "Animadversiones Plutarcheae: *De cohibenda ira et De ira*", *Lexis* 20 (2002) 133–142; "La pensée morale de Plutarque et le *Perì orgès*: une nouvelle interprétation", in J. Ribeiro Ferreira & D. Leão (eds), *Os fragmentos de Plutarco e a recepção da sua obra* (Coimbra 2003) 89–109; "La dottrina del telos nel pensiero e nell'opera di Plutarco", in M. Jufresa, F. Mestre, P. Gómez & P. Gilabert (eds), *Plutarco a la seva època: Paideia i Societat. Actas del VIII Simposio Internacional de la Sociedad Española de Plutarquistas. Barcelona 6–8 de Noviembre de 2003* (Barcelona 2005)

clearly. As he affirms, Plutarch's ethical affiliation was mainly that of a Platonist[48] and as such he regularly adopted a clear anti-Stoic attitude. Despite this, it is possible to find the influence of Stoic doctrines in his work, an issue which, as Becchi rightly claims, still needs a satisfying explanation.

This is especially noteworthy in regard to the passions, where we find strictly Platonic positions beside notions of a clear Stoic matrix: even as he openly criticized Chrysippus' view of passion as a mistake, Plutarch nevertheless appears to have combined a Platonic view of affections with the Stoic doctrine of διαστροφή, which explained how due to weakness (ἀσθένεια) of the mind,[49] passions may appear to drive people to vice. Indeed, Plutarch attacked his contemporaries for being in a state of 'mental poverty' (πενία ψυχική) brought about by their false opinions; allowing first for bad habits, this state forms at the end a second nature that prevents people from being free from error. According to Becchi, Plutarch did not actually contradict himself: in line with Posidonius but anticipating Galen, Plutarch asserted that ignorance and bad habits may sometimes incline to passions even those people who lack violent passionate impulses and have a sound rational part of the soul. Becchi's analysis of numerous passages from *Moralia* and *Lives* provides an overview of Plutarch's view of passions as "affections causing pain and fear in men not prepared by reason to bear bad luck". In fact, lack of philosophical training may cause inconsistencies and anomalies both in people with good natural qualities and in great characters. Wisdom should therefore be revered as most important and perfect art, as the culmination of both good reputation and all human endeavors.

The influence of the external world on the individual's soul also plays an important role in Raúl Caballero's chapter on the "Adventitious Motions of the Soul (Plu., *De Stoic. repugn.* 23, 1045B–F) and the Controversy between Aristo of Chios and the Middle Academy". Incidentally, it also places us at a general level in front of the inherent hermeneutic difficulties related to Plutarch's testimony of the philosophical discussion and interschool

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199–208; "Éthique et régime alimentaire dans les écrits plutarquiens de psychologie animale", in J. Boulogne (ed.), *Les Grecs de l'Antiquité et les animaux. Le cas remarquable de Plutarque. V Réseau international de recherche et de formation à la recherche "Plutarque", Lille 12–13 Dicembre 2003* (Lille 2005) 145–155; "*Apatheia* e *metriopatheia* in Plutarco", in A. Casanova (ed.), *Plutarco e l'età ellenistica. Atti del Convegno internazionale di Studi, Firenze 23–24 Settembre 2004* (Firenze 2005) 385–400.

[48] See below, this volume, 43–53 and F. Becchi, "Plutarco tra platonismo e aristotelismo: la filosofia come paideia dell'anima", in Pérez Jiménez et al., *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles*, 25–43.

[49] See, for example, Plu., *De tranq. an.* 468D; for the Stoic view, see Posid., fr. 169.77–117 E.-K.

polemics in which he took an active part and which, as we already noted, often appeared to be "deformed" due to the context of the tradition in which his discussion took place. Caballero's article provides a good example of Plutarch's combination of an anti-Stoic attitude with his rhetorical strategies to attack them.

In *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 23, Plutarch referred to Chrysippus' criticism of some philosophers who advocated the "adventitious faculty or motion of the soul" (ἡ ἐπελευστικὴ δύναμις / κίνησις τῆς ψυχῆς), a kind of motion taking place in the commanding part of the soul that has the power to release impulses from external causes. Of the three current interpretations of "these philosophers" (Stoic, Epicurean and Academic), Caballero regards the third as the most consistent since it fits with what is known about the criteria of action described by Arcesilaus and his disciples (Middle Academy) in their controversy with Zeno and his disciples of the early Stoa. Building upon previous work,[50] Caballero argues that Chrysippus was not attacking Aristo of Chios and his disciples, who introduced the idea of ἐπελεύσεις (*occurrentia*), but Arcesilaus and/or his followers of the Middle Academy, who probably adopted their terminology for dialectical purposes, which was a usual Academic method in their debates with the Stoics.

With Brenk's article on "Plutarch and 'Pagan Monotheism'", we move to a cardinal subject in Plutarch's work, namely his philosophical monotheism, a theme on which Plutarch has had an enormous lasting influence. The first decade of the twenty-first century produced a large number of important publications: aside from traditional studies focusing on Jewish-Christian monotheism alone and the way in which Christianity did or did not inherit Jewish monotheism[51]—showing an interest at the most in Near-Eastern precedents[52]—numerous recent investigations claim the need to

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[50] R. Caballero, "La doctrina de las ἐπελεύσεις y la libertad de indiferencia: de Aristón de Quíos a Arcesilao (Plut., *Stoic. rep.* 23, 1045 B–F)", in F. Frazier & D.F. Leão (eds), *Tychè et Pronoia. La marche du monde selon Plutarque* (Coimbra 2010) 13–38 at 13–15; idem, "Entre la necesidad del destino y la libertad del átomo: el *clinamen* epicúreo y la libertad de indiferencia (Plut., *Stoic. rep.* 23, 1045B–F)", in A. Pérez Jiménez & I. Calero Secall (eds), Δῶρον Μνημοσύνης. *Miscelánea de estudios ofrecidos a M^a Ángeles Durán López* (Zaragoza 2011) 69–82.

[51] See, for example, the collection of articles published by L.T. Stuckenbruck & W.W.S. North (eds), *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (London–New York 2004); W. Weiß, *Der eine Gott und das gemeinschaftliche Mahl: Inklusion und Exklusion biblischer Vorstellungen von Mahl und Gemeinschaft im Kontext antiker Festkultur* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2011) and U. Mell (ed.), *Der eine Gott und die Geschichte der Völker: Studien zur Inklusion und Exklusion im biblischen Monotheismus* (Neukirchen–Vluyn 2011).

[52] Thus the volume edited by B. Pongratz-Leisten (ed.), *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* (Winona Lake 2011).

widen the scope of research[53] to include all late antique monotheistic manifestations[54] and thus provide a sound context in which the success of Jewish-Christian monotheism may be plausibly explained. And indeed, ever since the publication of the collection of articles prepared by P. Athanissiadis and M. Frede, *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*,[55] research into paganism has received growing attention.[56]

This is the approach we find in the article by Brenk, a specialist on Plutarch's monotheistic traits. This issue has received important attention in recent years and studies have underlined both the Platonic context in which Plutarch's view of God should be placed[57] and the characteristic way in which his monotheistic inclinations are presented.[58] More specifically, scholars have focused on the characteristics of this divinity,[59] namely his unity and personality.[60] In line with Plutarch's view that philosophical truth transcends ethnic boundaries,[61] Brenk reconstructs the monotheistic soil on which Christianity was going to develop, taking Akhenaten's monotheistic enterprise in the second half of the second millennium BC as a starting point. After briefly reviewing *On Isis and Osiris*, the text in which Plutarch reduced the divine to one God, Brenk surveys those Plutarchean texts that may have exerted a major influence on Christian monotheism. *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* is one of these texts, since it describes the activity of a divinity crafting the world in a technomorphic cosmogonical model similar to that of Christianity.[62] *The E at Delphi*, however, is the text in which

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[53] D. Staudt, *Der eine und einzige Gott: monotheistische Formeln im Urchristentum und ihre Vorgeschichte bei Griechen und Juden* (Göttingen 2012).

[54] See, for example, E. Bons & T. Legrand, *Le monothéisme biblique: évolution, contextes et perspectives* (Paris 2011).

[55] P. Athanassiadi & M. Frede (eds), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford–New York 1999).

[56] See, for example, R.G. Kratz & H. Spieckermann (eds), *Götterbilder, Gottesbilder, Weltbilder: Polytheismus und Monotheismus in der Welt der Antike* (Tübingen 2006); S. Mitchell & P. van Nuffelen, *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge 2010).

[57] F. Ferrari, "Der Gott Plutarchs und der Gott Platons", in R. Hirsch-Luipold (ed.), *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch. Götter Bilder – Gottesbilder – Weltbilder* (Berlin–New York 2005) 13–26; F.E. Brenk, "Plutarch's Middle Platonic God: About to Enter (Or Remake) the Academy", in Hirsch-Luipold, *Gott und die Götter*, 27–49.

[58] Especially interesting in this line is the study by Hirsch-Luipold, "Der eine Gott bei Philo von Alexandrien und Plutarch", in idem, *Gott und die Götter*, 141–168.

[59] Hirsch-Luipold, "Der eine Gott", 152–161.

[60] See previous note and notably D. Massaro, "*To theion* e *o theos in Plutarco*", in Gallo, *Plutarco e la religione*, 337–355.

[61] Brenk, "Plutarch and Pagan Monotheism", 73–84 at 73–74.

[62] The distinction between the technomorphic vs the biomorphic cosmogonical models

Plutarch elevated the figure of Apollo above the pantheon—provided that the author is not echoing Ammonius' position rather than stating his own—in describing him in the famous fashion as *a-polus* or *a-polla* 'not many'.[63] In the author's view a comparison between Plutarch's monotheistic traits and Christian monotheism shows interesting similarities since they both constructed an idea of a supreme God by combining ethnographic studies to achieve a "true concept" of God and a philosophical well-defined view of God.

As already stated, Plutarch's influence on posterity has been extensive. Beside his views on ethics, his echo of the interschool polemics and the development of his philosophical monotheism, his testimony has also been crucial to the understanding of numerous famous figures of antiquity, notably Alcibiades, whose noxious attitude towards his native city was used in later tradition to attack the value and integrity of Platonic philosophy. Geert Roskam's article on "Socrates and Alcibiades: a Notorious σκάνδαλον in the Later Platonist Tradition", approaches their famous relationship from a political and an ethical perspective. As to the former, it briefly surveys the favorable and negative approaches to Socrates' double indictment for impiety and for corrupting the youth, evaluating the extent to which the second charge may not be alluding (even if indirectly) to the philosopher's association with influential statesmen such as Critias and Alcibiades. The ethical aspect comes to the fore when considering Socrates' influence on Alcibiades. Indeed Socrates' view that no one willingly goes wrong and the effectiveness of his educative and philosophical enterprise seemed to be blatantly refuted in the person of Alcibiades: if he was brilliant himself and had in Socrates the best possible teacher, how is it possible that his behavior deviated so much from the expected norm and caused so much harm to his native city?

This issue, of course, raised interesting philosophical questions that were amply dealt with in an early period of antiquity (e.g. Plato, Xenophon,

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is due to Burkert, *apud* J.N. Bremmer, "Canonical and Alternative Creation Myths in Ancient Greece", in G. van Kooten (ed.), *The Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-interpretations of Genesis I in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics* (Leiden 2005) 73–96. On Plutarch's *De animae procr*., see L. Baldi, *Plutarco. La generazione dell'anima nel Timeo* (Naples 2002).

[63] See J. Whittaker, "Ammonius on the Delphic E", *CQ* 19 (1969) 185–192 [= *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought* (London 1984) ch. V]; see also idem, "Plutarch, Platonism and Christianity", in H.J. Blumenthal & R.A. Markus (eds), *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought. Essays in Honour of A.H. Armstrong* (London 1981) 50–63 [= *Studies in Platonism*, ch. XXVIII, at 53–54].

Aeschines of Sphettus or Polycrates the Sophist) and continued to be relevant at a later time. As Roskam shows, Plutarch and Proclus provided testimony to the interest of later Platonists and the similarities between their approaches to the topic shows the extent to which Plutarch was read in antiquity. The differences in their approaches, however, make clear that Proclus mainly viewed Plutarch as a historian, which seems to be supported by the fact that he never quoted him by name.[64]

The last chapter of the philosophical section, "Salt in the Holy Water: Plutarch's *Quaestiones Naturales* in Michael Psellus' *De omnifaria doctrina*" by Michiel Meeusen, explores medieval Platonic scholar Psellus' reaction to Plutarch. In his work *De omnifaria doctrina*, Psellus addressed scientific problems from Plutarch's *Quaestiones Naturales*, notably those concerning physics and physiology. Meeusen focuses on the (mainly Platonic) sources of the first redaction of this work, with a view to focusing on the problems taken from Plutarch's *Quaestiones Naturales*. He stresses the importance of a detailed study of the work even from a purely textual perspective, since Psellus' interventions not only allow us to understand his working methods, but also provide insight into how he understood and dealt with *Quaestiones Naturales*.

2. *Plutarch and the Religious Discourse*

Plutarch's role in the history of ancient religiosity is as central as the one he plays in the history of ancient philosophy. One may even contest the separation of philosophy and religion in his work, claiming that such a distinction reveals itself to be artificial.[65] This idea may perhaps also be extrapolated to the whole historical period of late antiquity, in which the confluence between philosophy and religion or religion and philosophy marks off spirituality. In his comparative study of Philo and Plutarch's ideas of god, Rainer Hirsch-Luipold suggestively affirms that the comparison between both Platonists reveals a complete blend of religion and philosophy that is characterized by three distinctive elements:

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[64] G. Roskam, "Socrates and Alcibiades: a Notorious σκάνδαλον in the Later Platonist Tradition", 85–100.

[65] On Plutarch's comingling of religion and philosophy, see in general the volume edited by Gallo, *Plutarco e la religione* and particularly the articles by W. Burkert, "Plutarco: Religiosità personale e teologia filosofica", in Gallo, *Plutarco e la religione*, 11–28 and Moreschini, "Religion e filosofia in Plutarco", ibid. 29–48.

a) the combination of religious spirituality with philosophical speculation;
b) the allegorical interpretation of religious traditions; and
c) an emphasis on the immateriality and transcendence of a divinity whose unity and interaction with the world are facts.[66]

This combination of elements, foreseen by both authors, was rather widespread from the second century onwards. Taking its presence as a touchstone, we may widen the group to include many other Middle Platonists and Neopythagoreans as well as other authors such as those included in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Nag Hammadi Library.[67]

The testimony of Plutarch also reveals itself to be essential for the assessment of numerous general and particular religious issues, as with philosophical issues. The role and character of Dionysus in late antiquity is one example: Orphism and Dionysianism occupy a prominent place in the works of Plutarch's *Lives* and *Moralia*.[68] The relationship between Orphism and Dionysianism in antiquity was given due attention by Ana Isabel Jiménez in a previous work.[69] In this volume, her chapter on "Iacchus in Plutarch" relies

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[66] See Hirsch-Luipold, "Der eine Gott", 161–167, the section called "Religiöse Philosophie and philosophische Religion als Grundzug der Philosophie- und Religionsgeschichte der frühen Kaiserzeit", in which (at 161) he affirms: "Dabei wird deutlich worden, dass die gängingen Grenzziehungen zwischen Philosophie und Religion einerseits und zwischen jüdisch-christlicher (religiöser) Tradition und griechischer (philosophischer) Tradition anderseits verdecken, wie sehr das Verhältnis durch gegenseitige Beeinflussungen bestimmt ist, die das Wesen mindestens eines Stranges des kaiserzeitlichen Platonismus ausmachen, der als religiöse Philosophie zu verstehen ist".

[67] For the relationship between Plutarch and some of the Nag Hammadi texts, see L. Roig Lanzillotta, "Plutarch of Chaeronea and the Gnostic Worldview: Middle Platonism and the Nag Hammadi Library", in J.M. Candau Morón – F.J. González Ponce & A.L. Chávez Reino (eds), *Plutarco como transmisor. Actas del X Simposio Internacional de la Sociedad española de Plutarquistas. Sevilla, 12–14 de noviembre 2009* (Sevilla 2011) 401–417.

[68] On Plutarch and Orphism, see G. Méautis, "Plutarque et l'Orphisme", in *Mélanges G. Glotz* (Paris 1932) 575–585; R. Turcan, "Bona Dea et la Mere ineffable de Dionysus (Plut., *Caes*. 9)", in D. Porte & J.P. N'eraudau (eds), *Hommages a Henri Le Bonnier* (Brussels 1988) 428–440; M. Pinnoy, "Plutarque et l'orphisme", *AncSoc* 21 (1990) 201–214; L. Brisson, "Orphée et l'orphisme a l'époque impériale. Témoignages et interprétations philosophiques, de Plutarque à Jamblique", *ANRW* II.36.4 (1990) 2869–2931. For a recent and thorough analysis, see especially A. Bernabé, "Plutarco e l'orfismo", in Gallo, *Plutarco e la religione*, 63–104, with a textual appendix including a complete list of all Plutarch's passages referring to Orphism. On Dionysus in Plutarch, see G. Cassadio, "Osiride in Grecia e Diniso in Egitto", in Gallo, *Plutarco e la religione*, 201–227.

[69] On the differences, similarities and intersections between Orphism and Dionysism, see the thorough analysis by A. Jiménez San Cristóbal, "Orfismo y Dionisismo", in A. Bernabé & F. Casadesús (eds), *Orfeo y la tradición órfica. Un reencuentro* (Madrid 2008) 697–727.

on Plutarch's testimony to shed some light on an inveterate interpretation related to the god, namely whether the name Iacchus originally referred to an independent deity from Eleusinian circles that was later assimilated to Dionysus or whether it is an epiclesis of the god.[70] Numerous artistic and literary testimonies assimilate both names and the scholarly literature on the issue is far from reaching consensus. Jiménez's approach to the subject matter surveys sections of Plutarch's *Lives* and describes the procession that escorted Iacchus from Athens to Eleusis with a view to solving this hotly debated issue.

The philosophical section provides a first approach to Plutarch's theology by analyzing his philosophical monotheism and framing his views about the divine both in Platonism and in the wider context of late antique monotheistic tendencies. As stated above, Plutarch mainly based his views, as expressed in *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* and in *The E at Delphi*, on Plato's *Timaeus*. Plutarch's reception and use of the latter also occupies a central place in the chapter by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "Plutarch's Idea of God in the Religious and Philosophical Context of Late Antiquity". It is well known that in *The Malice of Herodotus* (857F–858A), Plutarch rejected Herodotus' motto πᾶν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες and accused the historian of blasphemy and malice. According to the traditional interpretation, Plutarch was reacting against a view of the gods as "utterly envious and always ready to confound us". However, such an interpretation clearly misses the point of Plutarch's criticism: first of all, the traditional interpretation seems to rely on an over-interpretation of Herodotus' conception of the divinity that interprets as "envious" (φθονερόν), which we may perhaps rather translate as "avaricious, stingy".[71] In the second place, for a thinker such as Plutarch who was so well versed in the *Timaeus* and who had such a refined and elevated view of the divine, the attack on Herodotus' misconception of the divinity—and his labeling Herodotus *nota bene* as blasphemous and malicious—must concern some more fundamental aspect of the divinity than the sheer attribution of envy to god.

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[70] See Ana Isabel Jiménez, "Iacchus in Plutarch", 125–135; see esp. 125 notes 2 and 3 for the numerous scholars for and against this assimilation.

[71] See L. Roig Lanzillotta, "Plutarch's Idea of God in the Religious and Philosophical Context of Late Antiquity", 137–150 and, in general idem, *La envidia en el pensamiento griego. De la época arcaica al helenismo* (Diss. Universidad Complutense; Madrid 1997); see also idem, "The So-called Envy of the Gods. Revisiting a Dogma of Ancient Greek Religion", in J. Dijkstra et al. (eds), *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer* (Leiden 2010) 75–93.

Taking this passage from *The Malice of Herodotus* as a starting point, Roig Lanzillotta illuminates numerous aspects of Plutarch's role as an interpreter, a theologian and a philosopher. Comparing this work with other Plutarchean passages that comment on the divine helps us to clarify both Plutarch's point of criticism and his view of the divinity. Plutarch's views on the divine should be placed in the context of the Middle Platonists' reception of *Timaeus* 29E, the *locus classicus* for the definition of God's goodness and his implicit creative activity. More specifically, his views should be placed in the context of Middle Platonic theodicy that denied any divine responsibility for the appearance of evil or imperfection in the realm of creation. In echoing and commenting upon Plato's words, Middle Platonists were mainly concerned with God's creative impulse, the stainless goodness behind it and the impossibility of making him responsible for anything imperfect that resulted from his activity.

The usefulness of Plutarch's testimony for the reconstruction of the religious map of late antiquity, however, is not exhausted by the information he transmitted as a detached observer. As already stated, his testimony is especially valuable for the active part he played in the religious world he described.[72] This close relationship comes to the fore in Angelo Casanova's chapter, "Plutarch as Apollo's Priest at Delphi". Despite the numerous works pondering Plutarch's relationship with Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi, the Pythia, Delphic religion or Apollo,[73] the fact is that Plutarch himself rarely referred to his role as a priest of Apollo. However, in spite of his relative silence about his office, there are a couple of Plutarchean places[74] in which the writer referred to it *in passant*. Casanova's philological mastery extracts all the information provided by the testimonies and, combining it with the Delphic inscription *Syll.*3 829A, extrapolates this information in order to illuminate a passage of *The E at Delphi* (385A), the obscurity of which has led some scholars to amend the text.

Beside the interest of Plutarch's testimony in the reconstruction of official Greek religion, *Moralia* also attests to his interest in a more popular

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[72] See, on this issue, W. Burkert, "Religiosità personale", *passim*.

[73] See below, this volume, 151–157. See also Flacelière, "Plutarch e la Pythia"; for Plutarch and Delphi, see Brenk, "The Religious Spirit", 330–336; also see the three relevant studies in the volume edited by Gallo, *Plutarco e la religione*: G. Sfameni Gasparro, "Plutarco e la religion delfica. Il dio filosofo e il suo profeta" (157–188); F. Conca, "Osservazioni sulla lingua e lo stile dei *Dialoghi Delfici*" (189–200); I. Chirassi Colombo, "Pythia e Sybilla. I problema dell'*atechnos mantiké* in Plutarco" (429–447); see more recently, P.A. Stadter, "Plutarch and Apollo of Delphi", in Hirsch-Luipold, *Gott und die Götter*, 197–214.

[74] See Plu., *An sen.* 792F and *Qu. conv.* 700E.

kind of religiosity. Scholarly consensus finds that his attitude towards popular beliefs in general and to superstitions of all kinds—such as omens, portents or evil daimones—in particular was rather reluctant[75] since he prided himself on his rationalism. However, the dichotomy of rational versus superstitious has been softened by recent studies.[76] Plutarch's *On superstition*, well known for his criticism of superstitious practices and beliefs, ridicules omens, portents, dreams and belief in the torments of the afterlife. However, as has been pointed out, "when one reads his *Lives* and even many of his *Moralia* one cannot help but feel that he reflects to an astounding degree a certain complex of popular beliefs in his day".[77] In spite of the criticism expressed elsewhere, Plutarch seems to have sometimes given credence to the supernatural and *Lives* abundantly exploits the dramatic power of premonitory events such as omens, portents, dreams and even eclipses.

This contrast comes to the fore in Aurelio Pérez Jiménez's chapter on "Plutarch's Attitude Towards Astral Biology". Despite the fact that recent studies affirm that Plutarch was critical of popular beliefs such as the symbolism and influence of the stars on animals or humans,[78] the study of relevant Plutarchean texts shows that the Chaeronean's views are more nuanced than scholars have been ready to admit. It is true that his position was generally rather rational and that he may have criticized superstitious beliefs that claim human beings are dependent on the stars and planets. However, as Pérez Jiménez shows, when astral biology seemed to be well grounded in ancestral observation, Plutarch was more prone to give credence to those beliefs.

Another example of Plutarch's inclination to deal with popular beliefs in a rather positive way may be seen in his echo of the ancient superstition

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[75] On superstition, see H. Moellering, *Plutarch on Superstition* (Boston 1963) 165–173; on the miraculous, B. Mackay, "Plutarch and the Miraculous", in C.F.D. Moule (ed.), *Miracles. Studies in their Philosophy and History* (London 1965) 93–113; and G.T. Smith, *The Importance of Miracle in the Religious Truth of Plutarch of Chaeronea* (Diss. New York 1972). For his hostility towards the belief in evil *demons*, see Brenk, "The Religious Spirit", 277.

[76] See R. Gordon, "Fear of Freedom? Selective Continuity in Religion During the Hellenistic Period", *Didaskalos* 4 (1972) 48–60, who relativised the view by E.R. Dodds, as expressed in his *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951). See also Brenk, "The Religious Spirit", 260–261.

[77] F.E. Brenk, "And to all the Sign Seemed Evil: Omens and Portents", in idem, *In Mist Apparelled. Religious Themes in Plutach's Moralia and Lives* (Leiden 1977) 184–213.

[78] See J. Hani, *La religion Égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque* (Paris 1976) and the criticism expressed by Aurelio Pérez Jiménez in his chapter, 159–169.

of the evil eye, belief in which was rather widespread in antiquity.[79] Admittedly, the question as to whether or not the evil eye should be considered a superstition is not that simple. It seems evident that, from a modern perspective, such a "belief" is simple superstition, but it was not that clear from an ancient perspective. Ever since Democritus, belief in the evil eye had been given a "physical" explanation, the validity of which can be traced up to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[80] That the line between well-founded belief (or even science) and superstition is rather tenuous can be seen in the fact that what for us is simply *Aberglaube* was during centuries past a rather solid piece of scientific theory.[81] The chapter by Paola Volpe-Cacciatore, "'Cicalata sul fascino volgarmente detto jettatura': Plutarch, *Qu. conv*. 5.7", provides a wide survey of beliefs about the evil eye and the power ancients attributed to the look of the envious. The chapter begins with the eighteenth-century study by N. Valletta, commented upon by B. Croce, in order to focus on the discussion of the motif in Plutarch's *Table Talks*. The discussion shows that although Plutarch was reluctant to embrace popular superstitions, he gave them some credence when they could be supported by the opinions of the ancients.

With Delfim Leão's chapter "The Eleusinian Mysteries and Political Timing in the *Life of Alcibiades*", we move away from popular beliefs to focus on Plutarch's interest in ancient history and more specifically on the relationship he saw between religious manifestations and political events. In his interpretation, the Eleusinian Mysteries mirrored periods of political and religious instability in Athenian society. Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades* provides an excellent example thereof as it shows that the Eleusinian Mysteries were closely connected to the life and political career of this charismatic statesman in two decisive moments: first, on the occasion of his process for *asebeia* that determined his exile and second, during his triumphant

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[79] See, in general, S. Seligman, *Der böse Blick und Verwandtes: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Aberglaubens aller Zeiten und Völker* (Berlin 1910).

[80] S. Seligman, *Die Zauberkraft des Auges und das Berufen: ein Kapitel aus der Geschichte des Aberglaubens* (The Hague 1985); see more recently Th. Rakoczy, *Böser Blick, Macht des Auges und Neid der Götter: eine Untersuchung zur Kraft des Blickes in der griechischen Literatur* (Tübingen 1996).

[81] For the symbolism of the eye in antiquity, see M. Steinhart, *Das Motiv des Auges in der griechischen Bildkunst* (Mainz 1995); for its reception in the Renaissance, see, for example, Garcilaso de La Vega's sonnet VIII that plays on the Democritean view that the atoms are projected from the eyes of the envious, reaching the object of their envy (to describe the way the sight of the beloved acts upon the lover). But see already Dante Alighieri, *La Vita Nuova* 19.70–73, "Degli occhi suoi, comme ch' ella gli muova/ escono spirti d'amore infiammati/, che fieron gli occhi a qual, che allor gli guati/ e pasan sì che 'l cor ciascun ritrova".

return to Athens.[82] The negative and positive roles, respectively, played by the Eleusinian Mysteries on both occasions reflect the favor and resistance Alcibiades enjoyed in Athenian society at different times of his life, revealing the extent to which religion and politics were interconnected during the upheavals of Athenian history.

The blend of religion and philosophy we characterized above as being part of late antique thought in general and of Philo and Plutarch in particular, comes to the fore in Rosario Scannapieco's chapter "Μυστηριώδης θεολογία: Plutarch's Fr. 157 Sandbach between Cultural Traditions and Philosophical Models". The analysis of fr. 157 Sandbach is the starting point for a wide-ranging study of Plutarch's view of myth and his eclectic approach to its interpretation. It shows Plutarch's interest in the theme of conjugal love, which was also present in his dialogue *On Love* and which also underlies the Egyptian myth in *On Isis and Osiris*. The author uncovers close ideological connections between the texts by analyzing the rhetorico-formal structures of the fragment in which Plutarch seems to have suggested a mystico-religious interpretation of reality.

Plutarch's testimony about the history of religions and, more specifically, religious movements in the Mediterranean during the first centuries CE is enormously important. He was a first-rate witness to early Christianity. Though his testimony was mainly indirect, this is precisely what makes his views so important for the reconstruction of the religious atmosphere at the time of the emergence of Christianity. As has been pointed out, "the lifetime of Plutarch, falling within the later first and early second century, coincides with one of the most crucial moments in the history of human thought, in that it was precisely during the lifetime of Plutarch that the new religion of Christianity came into contact with the old and well-established world of Greek philosophy. Thus the writings of Plutarch (…) permit us to access the intellectual state of the Graeco-Roman world at the exact moment of contact".[83]

George van Kooten's chapter, "A Non-Fideistic Interpretation of πίστις in Plutarch's Writings: the Harmony between πίστις and Knowledge", explains how Plutarch's testimony can help us improve our understanding of early Christianity. Van Kooten engages in a thorough study of Plutarch's uses of

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[82] See below, this volume, 181–192. The charismatic political and social figure of Alcibiades is also addressed by G. Roskam in chapter 5, 85–100.

[83] J. Whittaker, "Plutarch, Platonism and Christianity", in Blumenthal & Marus, *Neoplatonism*, 50–63 at 50.

the terms πίστις and πιστεύειν in *Moralia* in order to show the need for a better understanding of the notion of "belief" (πίστις) in both paganism and Christianity. Comparison with Plutarch shows that it is incorrect to differentiate between the many classical meanings of πίστις—which are allowed to vary depending on the context—and a specific theological, Pauline meaning.

The need to contextualize the Christian understanding of πίστις has also been recently supported at a general level by a conference organized by the Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne and the Institut européen en sciences des religions of the École Pratique des Hautes Études. Indeed, under the title "Conviction, croyance, foi: *pistis* et *fides* de Platon aux Pères",[84] the colloquium tried to trace the origin and development of this central notion in the religions of the ancient Mediterranean world. At a particular level, several studies by F. Frazier have already pointed out the central importance of the notion in Plutarch's work.[85]

According to van Kooten, the terms have been traditionally explained differently depending on their pagan or Christian contexts. While in the former the term πίστις allows for a variety of interpretations depending on its immediate context, in the latter it is interpreted exclusively according to its allegedly theological meaning, which allows for an exclusively "fideistic" interpretation. In the author's view, this is partly due to the influence of Luther's interpretation of Christianity, which was based on faith, and to Kantian philosophy, which strictly allotted the realms of belief and knowledge to religion and philosophy respectively. The study of Plutarch's use of the terms, however, shows that the modern "fideistic" interpretation of *pistis* in Pauline writings is barely tenable, since Plutarch's *Moralia* also includes senses such as "persuasion" or "trust", the religious meaning "belief" and even a philosophical sort of belief based on reason and proof.

The book draws to a close with an interesting chapter by Israel Muñoz Gallarte, "The Colors of the Soul", which once again shows the value of Plutarch's treasury of echoes of notions vaguely or firmly held in late antiquity. Muñoz Gallarte focuses on an intriguing subject that is strictly connected with the widely attested belief of the soul's descent from the divine region into the world of movement and decay. In fact, this view can be found in a variety of contexts covering the very wide spectrum from Plato

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[84] Organized by Ch. Grellard (Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne et Institut Universitaire de France), Ph. Hoffmann (École Pratique des Hautes Études) and L. Lavaud (Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne).

[85] See the references below, 216 note 4.

to the Chaldean Oracles. More specifically, the focus of this chapter is the belief—derived from the intersection between myth, religion, astrology and philosophy—that during the soul's descent through the planetary spheres, the planets give the soul different powers, traits, vices or passions that, depending on their positive or negative character, help or bother the soul during its earthly life. Muñoz Gallarte focuses on the association of passions with certain colors which turn up in pagan, Christian and Christian apocryphal texts with a view to determining the extent to which we can establish a common background for views that are clearly related.

I

PLUTARCH AND PHILOSOPHY

PLUTARCH ON THE SLEEPING SOUL AND THE WAKING INTELLECT AND ARISTOTLE'S DOUBLE ENTELECHY CONCEPT

Abraham P. Bos

1. *Plutarch and Aristotle's Lost Dialogues*

For many years I have been fascinated by Plutarch's myth at the end of his *Concerning the Face which appears in the Orb of the Moon*, on account of the fact that he talks there about a "dreaming god Kronos, shackled by Zeus with the bonds of sleep" (941F–942A). It inspired me to study Aristotle's lost dialogues, because I hoped to gain more clarity on the information we find in Tertullian, *On the Soul* 46.10, who reports that Aristotle somewhere presented the ridiculous idea of a "dreaming god Saturn" (*quod prior omnibus Saturnus somniavit*). I have explained this report as typical of Aristotle's lost dialogues and the "double theology" which he elaborated there.[1]

In my view, we find the same double theology in Aristotle's *On Philosophy*, recorded in the famous text of Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods* (1.13.33), where he has the Epicurean Velleius say that Aristotle creates much confusion by differing from his teacher Plato on one point (*multa turbat a magistro uno* [*Platone*] *dissentiens*). It is surprising that Aristotle is said to differ from Plato on one point only, since Aristotle formulated many points of criticism against the views of his teacher. Yet I think that Cicero's remark is correct and that the one, great difference between Aristotle and Plato consists in Aristotle's doctrine of soul.[2]

In the fragment mentioned Velleius says that Aristotle talks about the Intellect as the only divine entity (*modo enim menti tribuit omnem divinitatem*). But that he also talks about "another entity", which has the role of maintaining and regulating motion in the cosmos (*modo alium quendam*

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[1] See A.P. Bos, *Cosmic and Meta-Cosmic Theology in Aristotle's Lost Dialogues* (Leiden 1989) 16–20 and 83–96.

[2] Arist., *Philos*. fr. 26 Ross; 25, 1 Gigon. See [Hippol.], *Haer*. 1.20.3: σύμφωνος … πλὴν τοῦ περὶ ψυχῆς δόγματος.

praeficit mundo eique eas partes tribuit ut replicatione quadam mundi motum regat atque tueatur).

In my book cited in n. 1 above I have suggested that Aristotle was the first to introduce a systematic distinction between an absolutely transcendent Intellect (as Unmoved Mover and Ἀρχὴ τοῦ κόσμου) and a cosmic deity (as Moved Mover and Ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου) who is subordinate to him, but who does carry out the divine counsel of the transcendent Intellect, just as a winding mechanism carries out the plan of its designer.[3] This fits well with Aristotle's twofold ideal of life: the *bios theōrētikos* and the *bios praktikos*, and with the doctrine of a "limited" divine Providence traditionally attributed to him. I have always intuitively regarded the fact that, according to Plutarch, this subordinate god "is bound by Zeus with the bonds of sleep" (*De fac*. 941F) as indicating a difference in cognitive level and a typical Aristotelian revision of Plato's talk about "the prison" which the (visible) body forms for the soul.

The texts about "the Etrurian Robbers" which can be attributed to Aristotle's *Eudemus*[4] also talk about the bonds with which the soul is bound, and

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[3] This winding mechanism plays a role at crucial places in Aristotle's writings: in his doctrine of generation in *GA* 734B4–19; in his doctrine of locomotion in *MA* 701B2–13; and in his cosmology in *Mu.* 398B10–16. In my view, the "*replicatio*" in *Philos*. fr. 26 Ross; 25, 1 Gigon also refers to "the unwinding" of a winding mechanism. The authorship of *On the Cosmos* has always been hotly contested. Cf. P. Moraux, *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias*, 2 (Berlin 1984) 5–82; H.B. Gottschalk, "Aristotelian Philosophy in the Roman world from the Time of Cicero to the End of the Second Century", *ANRW* II.36.2 (1987) 1132–1139. The discussion has been radically affected by the conclusion of J. Barnes, "Review of G. Reale, *Aristotele. Trattato Sul cosmo per Alessandro* (1974)", *CR* 27 (1977) 40–43 that there are no intrinsic arguments left for denying Aristotle's authorship. But he believes that vocabulary and style do invalidate it. Barnes considers the work's likely date to be before 250 BC. D.M. Schenkeveld, "Language and Style of the Aristotelian *De Mundo* in Relation to the Question of its Inauthenticity", *Elenchos* 12 (1991) 221–255 argued for a date between 350–200 BC. But his dating of the work between 350 and 200 BC on the basis of language and style raises a problem: which anonymous and highly skilled author in this period would want to present his own ideas as Aristotelian in this way and why? For a complete survey of the modern debate, see G. Reale & A.P. Bos, *Il Trattato Sul Cosmo per Alessandro Attribuito ad Aristotele* (Milan 1995) 369–411.

[4] See Arist., *Protr*. fr. 10b Ross; 73 and 823 Gigon. J. Piquemal, "Sur une Métaphore de Clément d'Alexandrie: les Dieux, la Mort, la Mort des Dieux", *RPhilos* 88 (1963) 191–198 at 191, commented here that Aristotle has made Plato's "grave" into a "sarcophagus". See also A.P. Bos, "Aristotle on the Etruscan Robbers: a Core Text of 'Aristotelian' Dualism", *JHPh* 41 (2003) 289–306. It is highly remarkable that in the texts mentioned Aristotle talked about living prisoners being tied to corpses. He thus presented the visible body as a "corpse", vitalized by the soul with its (pneumatic) instrumental body. See on these texts now also A. Vallejo Campos, *Aristóteles, Fragmentos* (Madrid 2005) 168–169 and H. Flashar, *Aristoteles, Fragmente zu Philosophie, Rhetorik, Poetik, Dichtung* (Darmstadt 2006) 190.

through which something of a punishment by the gods is expressed. The ancient Orphic motif of earthly life as a form of penance and punishment for "Titanic" crimes already found in Plato also played an important role in Aristotle.

But this is not to say that Aristotle was a "Platonist" in his early phase and later broke with Plato. The hypothesis by W. Jaeger[5] and F. Nuyens[6] of a youthful phase in which Aristotle was entirely Platonistic and in which he produced his dialogues (after which he stopped publishing!) must be abandoned.[7] The fact of the matter is that the themes of "being bound" and "freedom", "being asleep" and "being awake" can be connected not only with Aristotle's lost works, but equally with the generally acknowledged writings in the Aristotelian corpus.[8]

In this paper I particularly want to argue that Plutarch's philosophical convictions were not only influenced by Aristotle's lost works, but also by the essential text in Aristotle's *On the Soul* 2.1. Everyone has always explained that chapter as characteristic of the mature and independent Aristotle. I want to argue that it has been wrongly explained for centuries (since CE 200), and that if it is explained properly there is complete "unanimity" between Aristotle's dialogue the *Eudemus* and his lecture treatise *On the Soul*.

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[5] W. Jaeger, *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung* (Berlin 1923). Engl. ed. Aristotle. *Fundamentals of the History of his Development* (Oxford 1934; ^{2}1948).

[6] F.J.C.J. Nuyens, *Ontwikkelingsmomenten in de Zielkunde van Aristoteles. Een Historisch-Philosophische Studie* (Nijmegen–Utrecht 1939). French ed. *L'Évolution de la Psychologie d'Aristote* (Leuven 1948).

[7] See A.P. Bos, "The Distinction between 'Platonic' and 'Aristotelian' Dualism, Illustrated from Plutarch's Myth in *De Facie in Orbe Lunae*", in A. Pérez Jiménez & F. Casadesús Bordoy (eds), *Estudios sobre Plutarco. Misticismo y Religiones Místéricas en la Obra de Plutarco* (Madrid–Malaga 2001) 57–70; *The Soul and its Instrumental Body. A Reinterpretation of Aristotle's Philosophy of Living Nature* (Leiden 2003); "'Development' in the Study of Aristotle" (Valedictory Lecture; Amsterdam 2006). Plu., *De virt. mor.* 442B does have a contrast between Aristotle's "writings" and "later views" (in the Aristotelian Corpus); see also 448A. But he does not indicate anywhere that he is referring to a contrast between a youthful phase and a mature philosophy in relation to the doctrine of soul, though he is rather well-informed about Aristotle's *Eudemus* but also knows his *De anima*.

[8] This is not to say that there is no good reason to talk about "Aristotle and other Platonists", as L.P. Gerson, *Aristotle and Other Platonists* (Ithaca 2005) has done.

2. *Aristotle's Definition of the Soul Misunderstood for Centuries*

According to Aristotle, the soul is the first entelechy of a natural body which potentially possesses life and is *organikon*.[9] At least from Alexander of Aphrodisias onwards the word *organikon* has been interpreted and translated as "equipped with organs".[10] However, ὀργανικόν never means "furnished with organs" in Aristotle, but always "instrumental", "serving as an instrument".[11] It is out of the question that only in the definition of soul the word ὀργανικόν has been given a meaning which it does not have anywhere else.[12] And recently there has been a significant change to the trans-

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[9] Arist., *De an*. 412B5–6: ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ ὀργανικοῦ (text A. Jannone & E. Barbotin, *Aristote, De l'Âme* [Paris 1966]). See Arist., *De an*. 412A27–28.

[10] See Alex. Aphrod., *De an*. 16.11: ἔστι γὰρ ὀργανικὸν σῶμα τὸ ἔχον πλείω τε καὶ διαφέροντα μέρη ψυχικαῖς δυνάμεσιν ὑπηρετεῖσθαι δυνάμενα. Plu., *Qu*. 54.9–11. In this interpretation it remains completely unclear how the development of the embryo can take place up till this stage of differentiated organs and how the soul could then be added at this stage. Because Aristotle states in *HA* 583B15–28 that a male foetus is ἄναρθρον, ἀδιάρθρωτον (unarticulated) during its first 40 days, scholars later concluded that such a foetus does not yet contain a soul. See G. Jerouschek, *Lebensschutz und Lebensbeginn. Kulturgeschichte des Abtreibungsverbot* (Stuttgart 1988) 14–16; 41 and L.G.M. Spruit, *Religie en Abortus. Interactiemodellen ter Verklaring van de Houding tegenover Abortus* (Nijmegen 1991) 68. D.A. Jones, *The Soul of the Embryo. An Enquiry into the Status of the Human Embryo in the Christian Tradition* (London 2004) 21–32 is much more accurate. But this conclusion is based on a misinterpretation of Aristotle's definition of soul. Nor does Aristotle say such a thing anywhere. And it would clash with his views in *GA* 2.1 and *De an*. 412B27 and 417B16–18, where he explicitly declares soul to be present in semen. See S. Föllinger, "Das Problem des Lebens in Aristoteles' Embryologie", in idem (ed.), *Was ist 'Leben'? Aristoteles' Anschauungen zur Entstehung und Funktionsweise von Leben* (Stuttgart 2010) 225–236, at 228–230. If Aristotle had really wanted to talk about "a body that possesses differentiated parts", he would have written σῶμα διηρθρωμένον. But to effect this differentiation, the soul always needs an "instrumental body". Aristotle's remarks in *De an*. 434B4–5; 434A13 and 418B9 should also have counted more significantly against Alexander of Aphrodisias' interpretation. From Plutarch, *Qu. Plat*. 1006D and [Hippolytus], *Haer*. 7.24.1–2 it is evident that before Alexander of Aphrodisias a different exegesis of *organikon* was accepted. It is remarkable that these texts never have been mentioned in commentaries on Aristotle, *De anima*.

[11] See Arist., *De an*. 432B18: "some part instrumental towards this movement", as translated by W.S. Hett, *Aristotle, On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath* (London 1936) 185; and B25: "parts instrumental to progression". H. Bonitz (ed.), *Index Aristotelicus* (Graz 1955) 521A20–49 mentions 23 passages. To these might be added six more: *De an*. 432B18; *HA* 491A26; *PA* 647A2; *IA* 705B2; *GA* 742B2; B10. C. Shields, "The Priority of Soul in Aristotle's *De Anima*: Mistaking Categories?", in D. Frede & B. Reis (eds), *Body and Soul in Ancient Philosophy* (Berlin–New York 2009) 267–290 at 282 n. 22 is right that on the basis of most of these texts it might be concluded that "anything which is sufficiently structured to be *organikon* must already be *anhomoiomerous*". But that is because Aristotle is speaking there about "instrumental parts". However, when Aristotle speaks about the "instrumental body" of the soul he means the body that is necessary for the production of these *anhomoiomerous* parts.

[12] See Shields, "The Priority of Soul", 282–283: "The word has this meaning nowhere in

lation "instrumental", "serving as an instrument".[13] (In fact, this is also how Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 1006D explained this term in the definition

Aristotle". See already L.A. Kosman, "Animals and Other Beings in Aristotle", in A. Gotthelf & J.G. Lennox (eds), *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle's Biology* (Cambridge 1987) 360–391 at 376. *Pace* R. Bolton, "Aristotle's Definition of the Soul. *De Anima*, II 1–3", *Phronesis* 23 (1978) 258–278 at 275 n. 6 and F. Ricken, "Review of A.P. Bos (2003)", *Th&Ph* 80 (2005) 425–427 at 426: "Die traditionelle Interpretation versteht unter *soma organikon* einen Körper, der mit Organen ausgestattet ist. An allen anderen Stellen, die der Index von Bonitz bringt, hat *organikon* nach B. jedoch nicht diese Bedeutung; es wurde vielmehr gebraucht für Dinge die instrumental sind, d.h., die als Mittel oder Werkzeug dienen. Das mag zutreffen, schließt jedoch nicht aus, daß Aristoteles das Wort in *De anima* 2.1 anders gebraucht. Daß das der Fall ist, wird aus den unmittelbar folgenden Zeilen (412b1–4) deutlich". See also M.D. Boeri, "Μήτ' ἄνευ σώματος εἶναι μήτε σῶμά τι ἡ ψυχή (Aristóteles, *De anima* B2, 414A19–20). A Propósito del Alcance de las Interpretaciones Funcionalistas de la Psicología Aristotélica y del Carácter Causal del Alma", *Elenchos* 30 (2009) 53–97 at 62–63 with n. 15 and R.W. Sharples, "The Hellenistic Period: What Happened to Hylomorphism?", in G. van Riel & P. Destrée (eds), *Ancient Perspectives on Aristotle's De Anima* (Leuven 2009) 155–166 at 159 n. 23: "A major difficulty to Bos's interpretation of Aristotle is that 412b1–4 need to be deleted as a mistaken gloss". On these lines 412b1–4 see also A.P. Bos, "Aristotle's Definition of the Soul: Why Was it Misunderstood for Centuries? The Dubious Lines *Anim*. II 1, 412b1–4", *MH* 69 (2012), forthcoming.

[13] See L.A. Kosman, "Animals", 376–377; M.L. Gill, *Aristotle on Substance. The Paradox of Unity* (Princeton 1989) 112, 133, 220; G. Reale & A.P. Bos, *Il Trattato Sul Cosmo per Alessandro attribuito ad Aristotele* (Milan 1995) 288; G.E.R. Lloyd, *Aristotelian Explorations* (Cambridge 1996) 40; S. Everson, *Aristotle on Perception* (Oxford 1997) 64; Bos, *The Soul and its Instrumental Body*, 69–122. See also J. Barnes, "Review of S. Everson (1997)", *CR* 49 (1999) 120–122 at 121; B. Schomakers, *Aristoteles, De Ziel* (Leende 2000) 219; 220; R. Ferwerda, *Aristoteles, Over Dieren* (Groningen 2000) 19; idem, *Aristoteles, Over Voortplanting* (Groningen 2005) 136; D. Gutiérrez-Giraldo, "Ψυχή and Genotype", in D. Sfendoni-Mentzou (ed.) *Aristotle and Contemporary Science*, 2 (New York 2001) 163–172 at 164; S. Menn, "Aristotle's Definition of Soul and the Programme of the *De Anima*", *OSAPh* 22 (2002) 83–139 at 110 n. 40; L.M. de Rijk, *Aristotle. Semantics and Ontology*, 1 (Leiden 2002) 50 n. 145; Gerson, *Aristotle*, 136; D. Quarantotto, *Causa Finale, Sostanza, Essenza in Aristotele* (Naples 2005) 240; J. Dillon, "Come fa l'Anima a dirigere il Corpo'? Tracce di una Disputa sulla Relazione Corpo—Anima nell'Antica Accademia", in M. Migliori et al. (eds), *Interiorità e Anima. La 'Psychè' in Platone* (Milan 2007) 51–57 at 55 n. 7; P. Gregoric, *Aristotle on the Common Sense* (Oxford 2007) 19, 23; R. King, "Review of A.P. Bos (2003)", *CR* 57 (2007) 322–323 at 323; R. Polansky, *Aristotle's De Anima* (Cambridge 2007) 161; K. Corcilius, *Streben und Bewegen. Aristoteles Theorie der Animalischen Ortsbewegung* (Berlin 2008) 31: "werkzeughaft"; F. Buddensiek, "Aristoteles' Zirbeldrüse? Zum Verhältnis von Seele und *Pneuma* in Aristoteles' Theorie der Ortsbewegung der Lebewesen", in Frede & Reis (eds), *Body and Soul*, 309–329 at 311; M. Canarsa, "Una Lacuna Platonica. Il Problema della Relazione Anima—Corpo nella Prima Accademia Antica", in A. Fermani & M. Migliori (eds), *Attività e Virtù. Anima e Corpo in Aristotele* (Milan 2009) 43–82 at 76 n. 79; J. Dillon, "How does the Soul Direct the Body, After All? Traces of a Dispute on Mind-Body Relations in the Old Academy", in Frede & Reis (eds), *Body and Soul*, 349–356 at 353 n. 7 ("perhaps"); P. Macfarlane & R. Polansky, "God, the Divine and the ΝΟΥΣ in Relation to the *De Anima*", in Van Riel & Destrée, *Ancient Perspectives*, 107–123 at

of soul.[14]) That change makes room for a new interpretation of "the body of the soul" in Aristotle's definition. A body "equipped with organs" must be the already developed, visible body of living entities. An "instrumental body" might be the vital heat or pneumatic body which the soul uses to produce the living entity, that is the *pneuma* of which in my view Aristotle demonstrated the necessity in his *On the Life-Bearing Spirit*.[15] Aristotle calls this instrumental body the ἔμφυτον or σύμφυτον πνεῦμα or "vital heat", ἔμφυτος θερμότης, ἔμψυχος θερμότης (*De an*. 416B29), ψυχικὴ θερμότης (*GA* 752A2; 762A20), φυσικὴ θερμότης (*Mete*. 380A20), τὸ θερμόν (*De an*. 416B29; *Spir*. 485A28), τὸ φυσικὸν θερμόν (*Mete*. 380A22), ἔμψυχος οὐσία (*Mu*. 394B11), ψυχικὸν πῦρ (*Resp*. 478A16), φυσικὸν πῦρ (*Resp*. 474B10–13) etc. What Aristotle means in *On the Soul* 2.1 is that the soul is the first entelechy of such a natural body, which serves it as an instrument for all its typical psychical functions.

3. *The Soul as "Entelechy" in Two Different Senses in Aristotle's* On the Soul *2.1*

But to fully understand Aristotle's definition of the soul we need to know what an "entelechy" actually is.[16] However, Aristotle does not state this any-

113; M. Migliori, "L'Anima in Aristotele. Una concezione polivalente e al contempo aporetica", in Fermani & Migliori, *Attività e Virtù*, 227–260 at 243–244; C. Shields, "The Priority of Soul", 283; W. Kullmann, "Übergänge zwischen Unbeseeltheit und Leben bei Aristoteles", in Föllinger (ed.), *Was ist 'Leben'?*, 115–135 at 118; R. King, "The Concept of Life and the Life-Cycle in *De Juventute*", in Föllinger, *Was ist 'Leben'?*, 171–187 at 178. This author adds: "there is a continuous investigation stretching from *De anima* to *Parva naturalia*. In both works there is a consistent view of the soul. *De anima* propagates a view of the soul which combines those elements supposedly distinguished by the tags *hylomorphic, instrumentalist*".

[14] See Cherniss, *Plutarch's Moralia* XIII, 1 (London–Cambridge 1976) ad loc., 81 note a and A.P. Bos, "Plutarch's Testimony to an Earlier Explanation of Aristotle's Definition of the Soul", in A. Pérez Jiménez et al. (eds), *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles* (Madrid 1999) 535–548 at 536.

[15] See A.P. Bos & R. Ferwerda, "Aristotle's *De Spiritu* as a Critique of the Doctrine of *Pneuma* in Plato and his Predecessors", *Mnemosyne* 60 (2007) 565–588 and *Aristotle, On the Life-Bearing Spirit* (*De Spiritu*). *A Discussion with Plato and his Predecessors on* Pneuma *as the Instrumental Body of the Soul* (Leiden 2008). Recently P. Macfarlane, *A Philosophical Commentary on Aristotle's De Spiritu* (Ph.D.-Thesis Duquesne University Pittsburgh 2007) has also defended the authenticity of *De Spiritu*.

[16] In *De an*. 402A25 Aristotle had already formulated as an important question which needs to be determined: "does soul belong to the class of potential existents, or is it rather an entelechy?"

where in the extant writings.[17] Basically every translator and commentator since Antiquity has given the impression that he knows what Aristotle means, whereas it is easy to advance objections to every proposed interpretation. Certainly we must reject G.A. Blair's proposition that *entelecheia* is in every respect equivalent to the term *energeia*.[18] For it is out of the question that the term *entelecheia* could be replaced by *energeia* in the definition of the soul. And in the proposition of *Metaphysics* 1072B26 that "the *energeia* of the Intellect is life" we cannot possibly replace *energeia* by "entelecheia".[19]

According to W.D. Ross, the term "'entelechy' probably derived from the phrase τὸ ἐντελὲς ἔχον, 'having completeness'".[20] The idea which it conveys, then, is that soul is not a substance separate from the body, but an added condition of body. However, this does not apply in relation to "that which is peculiar" to the soul, precisely because *to idion* of the soul is "separate" and is not something of a body. Nor is the soul "in act" that which the soul-body is "in potency". For "potency" and "act" are two conditions of the same entity. For example, in the text in *On Sleep* 454A8–10, they are two conditions of the "body of the soul".[21] This soul-body first has the "potency" for perception,

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[17] See Schomakers, *De ziel*, 93: "This term from Aristotle's private technical jargon remains inaccessible" (my translation). Schomakers devotes pp. 93–111 to its elucidation.

[18] G.A. Blair, "The Meaning of '*Energeia*' and '*Entelecheia*' in Aristotle", *IPQ* 7 (1967) 101–117 at 102, 110.

[19] Polansky, *De Anima*, 150 notes: "In the definition of soul, Aristotle uses one of his terms for actuality, *entelecheia*, rather than the alternative, *energeia*. These terms, both probably coined as technical terms by Aristotle himself, are difficult to distinguish and are sometimes used by him interchangeably". See Thillet, *De l'Âme*, 316. In the distinction of "a twofold entelechy" in *De an*. 412A10 and A22–23 it would also be difficult to present *energeia* as an equivalent of *entelecheia*. See also M. Ransome Johnson, *Aristotle on Teleology* (Oxford 2005) 86: "It would be a mistake to equate the terms".

[20] W.D. Ross, *Aristotle, De Anima* (Oxford 1961) 15. The question which urges itself is whether Greek did not have words available for this and why Aristotle introduced a neologism. Moreover, the term ἐντελής is used only once in the Corpus Aristotelicum. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De an*. 16.6 gave as derivation: ὡς τοῦ ἐν τῷ τέλει εἶναι τὸ πρᾶγμα οὗ ἐστιν οὖσαν αἰτίαν and rather often replaced the term ἐντελέχεια by τελειότης; *De an*. 16.1 and 5: ἔθος δὲ ᾽Αριστοτέλει τὴν τελειότητα καὶ ἐντελέχειαν λέγειν. See Blair, "The Meaning", 110, who presents as an alternative: 'having an end within'; idem, *Energeia and Entelecheia: 'Act' in Aristotle* (Ottawa 1992) 81: "having its end within it"; L. Couloubaritsis, "La notion d'᾽Εντελέχεια dans la *Métaphysique*", in *Aristotelica. Mélanges offerts à Marcel de Corte* (Bruxelles 1985) 129–155; D.W. Graham, "The Etymology of ᾽Εντελέχεια", *AJPh* 110 (1989) 73–80; G.A. Blair, "Aristotle on ᾽Εντελέχεια. A Reply to Daniel Graham", *AJPh* 114 (1993) 91–97; Bos, *The Soul and its Instrumental Body*, 132–135. Blair, *Energeia*, 1 notes the following alternatives used in English translations: 'actuality', 'fulfillment', 'complete reality'.

[21] Arist., *Somn.Vig*. 454A8–10: "What is called sense-perception, as actuality, is a kind of movement by the body of the soul". But all modern translators read here "a movement of the

and then is actually perceptive. The soul as entelechy is the *eidos* of the soul-body,[22] and it receives as subject of perception the *eidē* of the perceived objects (without their matter—*De an*. 424A18) and as subject of theoretical knowledge has knowledge of the intelligible objects of science. As *eidos* and as *logos* (*spermatikos*) of the instrumental body it determines the degree of growth and the quality of flesh and bones of the visible body.[23] But this takes us no further towards an explanation of the technical term "entelechy" which Aristotle uses for "the soul". And to speak about the soul which is already present in seed or in an embryo as "(first) actuality", "(first) complete reality", "(première) réalisation", does not seem to make sense.

I therefore want to take another look at what Aristotle said about "entelechy" as component of the definition of the soul in *On the Soul* 2.1. I start by noting that in *On the Soul* 412A9–11; A19–28 he distinguishes between "a twofold entelechy", which he clarifies by distinguishing between "knowledge" and "theorizing". In 412A9–11 Aristotle says:

> Matter is potentiality, while form is entelechy, and the word 'entelechy' is used in two senses, illustrated by (a) 'knowledge' and (b) 'theorizing'
>
> Ἔστι δ' ἡ μὲν ὕλη δύναμις, τὸ δ' εἶδος ἐντελέχεια, καὶ τοῦτο διχῶς, τὸ μὲν ὡς ἐπιστήμη, τὸ δ' ὡς τὸ θεωρεῖν.

After Aristotle has then specified the soul as *eidos* and entelechy of a body with certain qualities, he again addresses this theme of "a twofold entelechy" (412A22–26):

> But entelechy has two senses, analogous to "knowledge" and "theorizing". Clearly entelechy in our present sense is analogous to knowledge. For en *tōi hyparchein tēn psychēn* there is sleep and waking, and waking is analogous to theorizing, sleep to its possession without exercising it. And knowledge comes first in the order of becoming in relation to the same subject.
>
> Αὕτη δὲ λέγεται διχῶς, ἡ μὲν ὡς ἐπιστήμη, ἡ δ' ὡς τὸ θεωρεῖν. Φανερὸν οὖν ὅτι ὡς ἐπιστήμη· ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὑπάρχειν τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ὕπνος καὶ ἐγρήγορσις ἐστιν, ἀνάλογον δ' ἡ μὲν ἐγρήγορσις τῷ θεωρεῖν, ὁ δ' ὕπνος τῷ ἔχειν καὶ μὴ ἐνεργεῖν· προτέρα δὲ τῇ γενέσει ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἡ ἐπιστήμη.

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soul through the body", in a hylomorphistic sense. See A.P. Bos, "Perception as a Movement of the Instrumental Body of the Soul in Aristotle", *RhM* 154 (2011) 22–42.

[22] See Arist., *De an*. 412A10. Later authors also attribute to Arist., *Eudemus* the view that Aristotle presented the soul there as "a kind of *eidos*". See fr. 8 Ross; 64 Gigon. This may raise the question whether he also developed his theory of the soul as "first entelechy" in that dialogue.

[23] See Arist., *De an*. 416A14–18; *GA* 734B28–735A4.

This is an important statement. Here for the first time we find the notion of a "sleeping soul". But it is not easy to explain what Aristotle means by it, and I want to argue here that the right explanation has not been found up till now because the tradition has always accepted the interpretation by Alexander of Aphrodisias. And a major problem is that a transition from potency to act seems to be attributed here to the soul as entelechy, although the soul as entelechy has no materiality (and so, it would seem, cannot possess potency—cf. *De an*. 402A25–26). Also it is very remarkable that Aristotle does not seem to have explained anywhere in his *On the Soul* how the change is brought about from soul as first[24] entelechy to a soul as second (?) or ultimate (?) entelechy. It is striking too that, though Aristotle seems to be trying to clarify the concept, the text in which he does so admits of three different interpretations. In my discussion of this text in *The Soul and its Instrumental Body* (73) I indicated two interpretations and opted for the second as the correct one. I now believe that a third meaning should be seriously considered. And if this third meaning is correct, then we can dismiss the entire modern hypothesis about three different phases in Aristotle's philosophy because there can no longer be any question of a discrepancy between the psychology of *On the Soul* and that of the *Eudemus* and we then have the final explanation for Plutarch's distinction between a sleeping World Soul and a waking Intellect. Just to be perfectly clear, I want to note here that, in my view, the best translation of *entelecheia* would be: "Goal-Pointing System" (G.P.S.), "goal-keeper principle", "goal-seeking principle".[25]

I note that the contrast which Aristotle draws here between "theorizing" and "knowledge" is not drawn anywhere else by him in this way. What he says here is emphatically different from the opposition between "theorizing" and "knowing" (ἐπίστασθαι). The contrast drawn here seems to indicate the distinction between an intellect-in-act thinking *noeta* or "intelligibles" on the one hand, and these *noeta* in themselves on the other, apart from the subject that is intellectually active.

Now Aristotle characterized "the soul-in-itself" as intellect and as "separate" from all corporeality. On the other hand the soul requires an instrumental body for all its non-intellectual activities. If we regard this

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[24] It might be asked why Aristotle in *De an*. 412A27 and B5 did not speak about ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρότερα.

[25] It would be Aristotle's *hēgemonikon* in the two different senses of a "sleeping" guiding principle and a "waking" guiding principle. See *Mu*. 391A11: ἡ γοῦν ψυχή, διὰ φιλοσοφίας, λαβοῦσα ἡγεμόνα τὸν νοῦν, … ἐξεδήμησεν. The term seems to be Aristotle's alternative to Plato's term ἡνιόχησις (*Phdr*. 246B4. Plato uses ἡνιοχεία in *Thg*. 123D; *Grg*. 516E; *Lg*. 795A).

distinction between "the soul-in-itself" (= intellect) and "the soul-not-in-itself-but-inextricably-linked-to-its-instrumental-body" as two different conditions of soul, it is natural to relate the intellect to "theorizing" (τὸ θεωρεῖν). For the condition of the soul together with its instrumental body, we are then left with the condition of "knowledge" (ἐπιστήμη) as analogue.

4. *Three Ways of Explaining Aristotle's "Twofold Entelechy"*

(a) The first explanation takes "sleep" and "waking" literally, and concludes that Aristotle emphasizes here that a living being that sleeps possesses soul just as much as a living being that is awake.[26] But this cannot possibly be right. According to Aristotle, plants do have a soul as entelechy, but do not sleep, because sleep is the non-active state of the perceptive soul-part, which plants do not possess (*Somn.Vig.* 454B27–29). But the distinction which Aristotle introduces here applies to every soul in the sense that every soul is either a sleeping entelechy or a waking entelechy. The soul of a plant is certainly a "first entelechy", i.e. comparable with knowledge. The growth of a plant is always regulated by the specific *eidos* of this plant as the goal setting principle. But this is not to say that in the growth of this plant there is an intellect active which "thinks" this form. We should doubtless assume that Aristotle is using the notions of "sleep" and "waking" metaphorically here. He is not talking about the sleeping or waking of a human being or animal, but of the soul.

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[26] See R.D. Hicks, *Aristotle, De Anima* (Cambridge 1907) 51: "for sleep, as well as waking, implies the presence of soul"; See J.A. Smith, *Aristotle, De anima*, in W.D. Ross (ed.), *The Works of Aristotle*, 3 (Oxford 1931): "for both sleeping and waking presuppose the existence of soul"; Hett, *On the Soul*, 69: "for both sleep and waking depend upon the presence of soul"; P. Siwek, *Aristoteles, De Anima, Libri Tres*, 2 (Rome 1954) 93: "nam sive somnus sive vigilia tunc tantum adesse posset, quando adest anima"; J. Tricot, *Aristote, De l'Âme* (Paris 1959) 67: "le sommeil aussi bien que la veille impliquent la présence de l'âme"; Ross, *De Anima*, 211: "for both sleep and waking involve existence of soul". Likewise in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1 (Princeton 1984) 656. In the same way G. Movia, *Aristotele, L'Anima* (Naples 1979) 138; M. Furth, *Substance, Form and Psyche: an Aristotelean Metaphysics* (Cambridge 1988) 150; Blair, *Energeia*, 87: "sleep and waking belong to the soul"; M. Durrant (ed.), *Aristotle's De Anima in Focus* (London 1993) 21: "for sleep, as well as waking, implies the presence of soul"; R. Bodéüs, *Aristote, De l'Âme* (Paris 1993) 137: "la présence de l'âme implique sommeil et éveil", with n. 1: "Cette affirmation vaut évidemment pour tous les animaux. Elle ne s'applique pas, comme telle, aux végétaux …". H. Seidl, *Aristoteles, Über die Seele* (Hamburg 1995) 61: "mit dem Dasein des Seele gibt es auch Schlaf und Wachen"; Schomakers, *De ziel*, 219: "Waar ziel is, komen ook slaap en waken voor" ["where there is soul, sleep and waking exist too"] (but see also p. 381).

(b) Up till now the most plausible translation was that of A. Jannone and E. Barbotin: "Car le fait d'être animé comporte les deux états de veille et de sommeil". ("In being ensouled there are two different states, that of sleep and that of waking"–my translation).[27] In that case Aristotle is referring here to the possibility that soul may be present in an ensouled body, of a plant just as much as of an animal, even if it does not manifest itself in activity. If this was Aristotle's meaning, he is emphasizing that a grain of corn or a chestnut not yet sown or planted is in a state of germinative dormancy, which he represents as a "sleep" of (the vegetative part of) the soul, and that the sensitive soul-part of a sleeping dog is "asleep", just as the rational soul-part of a human embryo is "asleep".

(c) But in this interpretation Jannone and Barbotin talk about a twofold condition of "what is ensouled", not about a twofold condition of "soul". They read ὑπάρχειν as "to belong to", as if it is followed by a dative and as if the text had ἐν γὰρ τῷ ⟨τινι⟩ ὑπάρχειν τὴν ψυχὴν[28] and as if something that possesses soul has the two conditions of "sleeping" and "waking". But ὑπάρχειν is not followed by a dative here and is used at least as often by Aristotle as an equivalent of εἶναι.[29] The sentence in question can and should therefore be read as: "For in being soul there is sleep and waking".[30] The soul is "entelechy" ("Goal-Pointing System") in two conditions, viz. that of a sleeping entelechy and that of an awakened entelechy.

If this third option is the correct translation, Aristotle is talking about a very different "sleep of the soul" from that in explanation (b). In that case he is not talking about certain psychical functions which have not yet developed

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[27] See Jannone & Barbotin, *De l'Âme*, 30; P. Gohlke, *Aristoteles, Über die Seele* (Paderborn 1947) 56: "Denn in der Beseelung liegt sowohl Schlafen wie Wachen"; W. Theiler, *Aristoteles: Über die Seele* (Darmstadt 1959) 24: "Mit dem Dasein der Seele ist auch Schlaf und Wachen gegeben" (with an explanation on p. 107); Thillet, *De l'Âme*, 103: "dans le fait d'avoir une âme, il y a sommeil et veille"; Polansky, *De Anima*, 158: "sleeping pertains to what has soul as does being awake". This explanation also seems to be the choice of Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus*, 279B25–27.

[28] As in Arist., *De an.* 402A10: τὰ δὲ δι' ἐκείνην καὶ τοῖς ζώοις ὑπάρχειν and in the *Analytics*—*passim*.

[29] See H. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* 788B43 ff. and *De an.* 430A13: ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ὑπάρχειν ταύτας τὰς διαφοράς and 417B25: ἀναγκαῖον γὰρ ὑπάρχειν τὸ αἰσθητόν. 418B8: τις φύσις ὑπάρχουσα ἡ αὐτή. 434A31: "For all provisions of nature are means to an end" (Ἕνεκά του γὰρ ἅπαντα ὑπάρχει τὰ φύσει); *Metaph.* 1004A4: ὑπάρχει γὰρ εὐθὺς γένη ἔχον τὸ ὄν. *Spir.* 485B14. See also LSJ, s.v. B3 and 4.

[30] The translation by Jannone and Barbotin would then have to be corrected to: "Car le fait *d'être âme* comporte les deux états de veille et de sommeil".

into vital processes, but about the distinction between (i) the soul "bound with the bonds of sleep" through its connection with a natural instrumental body, and (ii) the soul that has been "wakened", and has woken up from its slumber, its narcosis, its hypnosis, its sleepwalking, its lethargy, to its own activity, that of theoretical activity, *theôria*. Read in this way, Aristotle's distinction means that every soul, as long as it is connected with a natural body, is a sleeping entelechy, in whatever phase of development the living creature is. And this sleep lasts till the moment when it realizes its potential for intellectuality and no longer needs its natural instrumental body.

From its earliest beginning till the death of the new specimen the soul as entelechy is the directive principle. But it is clear that there is no "charioteer" present in the fertilized egg-cell, in the way that Plato in his *Phaedrus* talked about the leading part of the soul. The development of an embryo is a process that takes place according to fixed patterns and a fixed schedule, in accordance with the principles of (living) nature. These patterns are laid down in the soul as a dynamic regulatory principle. Aristotle can even characterise the operation of these soul-principles as "scientific".[31] That is the basis of his thesis that human craft cannot do much more than imitate and supplement nature. The soul needs to use its instrumental body in the same way that human crafts need to use their instruments (*De an.* 407B25–26). However, Aristotle does recognize that in some living creatures (in particular human beings) this natural process can turn into a process which leads to a form of self-regulation. If he/she has passed through all the natural phases of development, a human being can start to live and act purposively. The big question for Aristotle was: how can this be? He did not attribute the same possibility to plants and animals. Their soul-principle is nothing but the soul-principle which directs the functions realized by their instrumental soul-body (*De an.* 413A5–6).[32]

But man possesses a soul which is entelechy in such a way that it is not only the entelechy of the parts of its instrumental body, but can also exist and function "separately" from its instrumental body. It is then intellect and is theoretically active (θεωρῶν). As soul it is then entelechy in the way that a sailor is the entelechy of his ship, in the sense that it no more needs the ship

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[31] This could be supported with a reference to *De an.* 433A5 καὶ ὅλως δὲ ὁρῶμεν ὅτι ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἰατρικὴν οὐκ ἰᾶται, ὡς ἑτέρου τινὸς κυρίου ὄντος τοῦ ποιεῖν κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ἀλλ' οὐ τῆς ἐπιστήμης, which talks about the vegetative soul and its instrumental body as operative κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμην, though this passage has always been interpreted differently.

[32] That could be the reason why Aristotle understood plants and animals as having a soul as "first order" entelechy only.

(its instrumental body) and can realize its own functions. Whereas Aristotle can refer to the activity of the Intellect as "life",[33] in this passage he seems to characterize all activity of "the soul" connected with an instrumental body as a form of "sleep",[34] for which Aristotle adduced Endymion as a model.[35]

But this leads to the conclusion that Aristotle is postulating here: the soul of all living creatures subject to generation and decay, and presumably even the soul of the cosmic heavenly beings, is a sleeping intellect.[36] And as soon as this soul has been wakened, it is no longer the soul of a living being, but intellect. This soul has then changed into "a different genus of soul" (in the formulation of *De an.* 413B26),[37] as if it has regained "consciousness" after a coma. Just like the sailor who, having arrived in a safe harbor, no more needs his ship and can finally go about his own business (*De an.* 413A8–9).[38] It is precisely this crucial "change", which does not presuppose any matter,

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[33] See Arist., *Metaph.* 1072B26–27: ἡ γὰρ νοῦ ἐνέργεια ζωή.

[34] In Arist., *De an.* 413A22–25 he observes that "life" has many meanings and lists as forms of life: intellect, perception, locomotion, growth.

[35] See Arist., *EN* 1178B18–20 and A.P. Bos, "Is the "Greek King" in Aristotle's *Eudemus* fr. 11 (Ross) Endymion of Elis?", *ModSch* 65 (1988) 79–96. See also Plu., *De fac.* 945B. For that reason human nature could be called "unfree in many ways" (Arist., *Metaph.* 982B29) and "bat-like" (Arist., *Metaph.* 993B9–11) and to be compared with prisoners of Etruscan robbers (Arist., *Protr.* fr. 10b Ross; 73 Gigon).

[36] Plato had developed the theory that the soul's imprisonment in a mortal body should be seen as being due to loss of knowledge of the world of Ideas, but did not lead to loss of immortality. Aristotle maintained that the "covering" of an intellectual principle by a fine-material natural body was due to loss of *gnōsis*, but was not accompanied by a loss of its goal-orientedness or its character of entelechy.

[37] Aristotle might well have formulated the proposition of Plu., *De fac.* 943A: "in the same degree as soul is superior to body, so is mind better and more divine than soul". J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London 1977) 213 rightly notes in this connection: "Aristotle's remarks on the separateness and immortality of the *nous* in *De an.* 3.5 have obviously exerted their influence for a start".

[38] *Contra* Ross, *De Anima*, 21: "At the end of the chapter (413A8–9) comes the curious statement, 'But it is still doubtful whether the soul is a completion of the body in this way, or as the sailor is of his boat'. This is, of course, the suggestion of a completely different theory of the soul from that presented in the rest of the chapter. We must suppose that Aristotle meant to discuss this suggestion later; but if he did, he never, so far as we know, carried out his intention". On p. 215 Ross also noted: "We need not suppose that Ar. has any doubt which of the two alternatives he mentions is correct; what he says is that he has not yet disproved the suggestion that the soul is the body as a steersman is to his ship. He does not return to the suggestion elsewhere." But for Aristotle, in writing *De an.* 413A8–9, this is not "doubtful" at all, and he never intended to refute this option. On the contrary: *he is going to prove* this option in 3.4–5. However, he admits here that he has not yet sufficiently clarified the matter (but says that he will do so).

that is explained in *On the Soul* 3.5. That chapter provides the only but at the same time completely sufficient answer to the question how the transition from "first entelechy" to "ultimate entelechy" might occur.[39]

The entire problem of whether Aristotle's *On the Soul* proposed the same or a different doctrine of soul compared with the *Eudemus* hinges on the explanation of this one passage. And given the total bankruptcy of the approach of Aristotle's philosophy in terms of a historical development[40] we will have to opt for the possibility that the conception of the *Eudemus* was still completely valid for Aristotle when he wrote *On the Soul*.[41]

5. *The Intellect That Is Wakened*

Against this background we can much better explain the theme of "the sleeping World Soul" which we find in Plutarch and Alcinous,[42] philosophers often labeled "Middle-Platonists", but who in this regard, too, are much more "Aristotelians" than Platonists. When Plutarch says that Zeus bound Kronos with the bonds of sleep, he also means that Kronos is bound with the bonds of a natural body and that he is part of the cosmic and physical world.[43] And when he states that in this condition Kronos passes on as dream oracles "all that Zeus premeditates" (942A),[44] Plutarch is using the Aristotelian model of divine Providence, in the sense that all Nature,

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[39] There might be a link between *De an.* 430A30–31: ἡ δὲ κατὰ δύναμιν χρόνῳ προτέρα ἐν τῷ ἑνί, ὅλως δὲ οὐδὲ χρόνῳ and *De an.* 412A26: προτέρα δὲ τῇ γενέσει ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἡ ἐπιστήμη. Perhaps the words τῇ γενέσει in the remark προτέρα δὲ τῇ γενέσει ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἡ ἐπιστήμη in *De an.* 412A26 should therefore be taken in the sense of "included in the process of generation" and the passage should be interpreted as: "In the sphere of generation, with regard to one and the same (natural body possessing life potentially) (entelechy in the sense of) 'knowledge' is earlier (than entelechy in the sense of 'theorizing')".

[40] The attempts of W. Wians (ed.), *Aristotle's Philosophical Development. Problems and Prospects* (Lanham–London 1996) to adduce new reasons for assuming a development in Aristotle's thought cannot be called compelling. See Bos, "Development".

[41] It then becomes clear too that the image of the "sailor in his ship" is highly appropriate to the dialogue *Eudemus*, whose protagonist comes from the island of Cyprus and is driven by the longing "to return home", just as Odysseus was spurred on by "nostalgia" to return, after his years of wandering, to Ithaca and his beloved Penelope.

[42] Plu., *De fac.* 940F; *De an. procr.* 1026E–F; 1016C; Alcin., *Didask.* 10; 14.

[43] Plu., *De fac.* 941F.

[44] H. Cherniss reconstructs the text of *De fac.* 942A as if an alternation occurs in Kronos' condition, but this reconstruction is based on many uncertainties. We will have to assume that "sleep" is a constant characteristic of Kronos and that it is closely connected with Kronos' Titanic "affections". But Aristotle, too, leaves room for a succession of world epochs.

thanks to the World Soul, in the way of a winding mechanism,[45] works in a perfectly goal-guided way, though (because it is "asleep"), it is not itself goal-oriented.

The same motif of the dependence of the World Soul on the transcendent divine Intellect is also present in the remarkable exegesis of Plato's *Timaeus* provided by Plutarch in *On the Generation of the Soul*.[46]

A closely related text is Alcinous' *Didaskalikos* or *Handbook of Platonism*.[47] This work was formerly attributed to Albinus. In any case it professes to be in the Platonistic tradition. In his doctrine of principles or theology Alcinous talks successively about "matter", "the Ideas", and "God".[48] In chapter 10 he describes God in a way which cannot be traced back to Plato's own oeuvre. The "first God" is called the Intellect, who always thinks all intelligibilia collectively in a pure fashion, free of and unmixed with any sensible reality. This supreme God is then said to be the cause of the eternal actualization of the Intellect of the World Soul. And God, though himself unmoved, is cause, just as the Sun is the cause of seeing and the object of desire the cause of desire.

Alcinous clarifies the way in which the transcendent Intellect is the cause of the World Intellect as follows: "By his own will he has filled all things with himself, rousing up the Soul of the World and turning it towards himself, as being the cause of its intellect. It is this latter that, set in order by the Father, itself imposes order on all of nature in this world".[49] We should consider here that "will" is always the basis of "action", and as such does not belong not to the "essence" of God, but to his power according to the distinction which Aristotle draws in *On the Cosmos* 397B17–398A6.[50] In chapter 14 the author

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[45] See n. 3 above.

[46] Plu., *De an. procr.* 1026E–F: ἔσται δὲ τις χρόνου μοῖρα καὶ γέγονεν ἤδη πολλάκις, ἐν ᾗ τὸ μὲν φρόνιμον ἀμβλύνεται καὶ καταδαρθάνει λήθης ἐμπιπλάμενον τοῦ οἰκείου … ἀλλ' ἀνήνεγκεν αὖθις τὰ βελτίω καὶ ἀνέβλεψε πρὸς τὸ παράδειγμα θεοῦ συνεπιστρέφοντος καὶ συναπευθύνοντος. See *De an. procr.* 1016C. K. Alt, *Weltflucht und Weltbejahung. Zur Frage des Dualismus bei Plutarch, Numenios, Plotin* (Stuttgart 1993) 20 gets no further than: "Der Gedanke, dass das Geistige in der Seele schläft, ist auffallend". And: "innerhalb der Timaios-Erklärung bleibt diese Variante aus dem Politikos-Mythos ein schlecht integrierbarer Sonderaspekt".

[47] J. Dillon, *Alcinous, The Handbook of Platonism* (Oxford 1993); J. Whittaker & P. Louis, *Alcinoös, Enseignement des Doctrines de Platon* (Paris 1990).

[48] Alcin., *Didask.* 8–10 (162.24–166.14).

[49] Alcin., *Didask.* 10 (164.42–165.4): κατὰ γὰρ τὴν αὐτοῦ βούλησιν ἐμπέπληκε πάντα ἑαυτοῦ, τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ κόσμου ἐπεγείρας καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπιστρέψας, τοῦ νοῦ αὐτῆς αἴτιος ὑπάρχων· ὃς κοσμηθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς διακοσμεῖ σύμπασαν φύσιν ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ.

[50] In the same work Zeus is also said to be "male and female" in the Orphic hymn quoted in *Mu.* 401B2. In the *Poimandres* (*CH* I) 8 God's Will is explicitly characterized as the female aspect of God.

adds the comment: "Also, God does not create the soul of the world, since it exists eternally, but he brings it to order, and to this extent he might be said to create it, by wakening and turning towards himself both its intellect and itself, as out of some deep coma (*karos*) or sleep, so that by looking towards the objects of intellection inherent in him it may receive the Forms and shapes, through striving to attain to his thoughts".[51]

In his discussion of Alcinous' theology of the transcendent supreme God, J. Dillon remarked: "It is in fact the Aristotelian Prime Mover of *Metaphysics* 12. The description of God is to be seen neither as original to Albinus nor as, properly speaking, eclectic. As far as Albinus is concerned, Aristotle is simply in this case giving a true account of Platonic doctrine".[52] His discussion of Alcinous' doctrine of the World Soul is unclear because Dillon seems to suggest that, according to Alcinous, "the irrational World Soul or the World Soul in its irrational or unorganized aspect" needs to be wakened and organized.[53] In his discussion of the same motif in Plutarch, Dillon had observed: "This image of the sleeping World Soul (the "Sleeping Beauty" myth, one might call it) is rather mysterious in origin. It is not a Platonic image in this form, though the image of our life as a sleep or dream is an old and respectable one. It may simply be an imaginative development of the *Politicus* myth, but the fact that it is found in both Plutarch and Albinus suggests that it is older than both".[54]

W. Deuse, too, paid attention to the texts of Alcinous cited above, grouping them under the heading "Seele und Nous" and characterizing them as

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[51] Alcin., *Didask*. 14 (169.36–41): καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν δὲ ἀεὶ οὖσαν τοῦ κόσμου οὐχὶ ποιεῖ ὁ θεός, ἀλλὰ κατακοσμεῖ, καὶ ταύτῃ λέγοιτ' ἂν καὶ ποιεῖν, ἐγείρων καὶ ἐπιστρέφων πρὸς αὑτὸν τόν τε νοῦν αὐτῆς καὶ αὐτὴν ὥσπερ ἐκ κάρου τινὸς βαθέος ἢ ὕπνου, ὅπως ἀποβλέπουσα πρὸς τὰ νοητὰ αὐτοῦ δέχηται τὰ εἴδη καὶ τὰς μορφάς, ἐφιεμένη τοῦ ἐκείνου νοημάτων. Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 287 notes for the term "*karos*" that it is "dredged up from somewhere in the underworld of Middle Platonism".

[52] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 283 and *Alcinous*, 103. In 1977 he still identified Albinus as the author of the *Didaskalikos*. On p. 276 Dillon already noted that *Didask*. used "Aristotle's distinction between theoretical and practical wisdom". This distinction is parallel to the distinction between two kinds of entelechy. See also A.H. Armstrong, "Aristotle in Plotinus: the Continuity and Discontinuity of *Psychè* and *Nous*", in H.J. Blumenthal & H. Robinson (eds), *Aristotle and the Later Tradition* (Oxford 1991) 117–127 at 117.

[53] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 284 and *Alcinous*, 106 and xxxiii. But we will have to maintain that only the soul's intellectual *dynamis* can be wakened to intellectuality.

[54] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 206, with reference to Plu., *De an. procr*. 1026E–F. See also his p. 287 and Whittaker & Louis, *Alcinoös*, 114 n. 267. We find the same doctrine in Aristid. Quint., *Mus*. 3.25: τὴν γὰρ δὴ ψυχὴν ἐπὶ τάδε ῥέψασαν ἀποβολῇ φρονήσεως οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἀγνωσίᾳ καὶ λήθῃ διὰ τὸν σωματικὸν γινονένην κάρον.

"Dualismus Gott-Seele".[55] For Deuse it is clear that Alcinous works with the conceptual pair δύναμις—ἐνέργεια, which derives from Aristotle. He also refers to Aristotelian texts which could be illuminating.[56]

However, Deuse here has missed the true meaning of the important text in Aristotle, *On the Soul* 2.1. What is specific to his theory of soul is that he presented the "potency for intellect" as a "potency of the soul". At the same time he presented the "*nous*-in-act" as being "of another genus" than the soul, because the "*nous*-in-act" does not have a relation with any material activity. The consequence of Aristotle's dualism of soul and intellect was, besides, that the transition from "*nous*-in-potency" to "*nous*-in-act" could not be regarded as a natural process, like teething or learning to walk. The intellect-of-the-soul only achieves realization because the soul turns away from material reality and is attracted by the reality of the *noeta*.

Clearly Alcinous integrated this line of thought into his version of Plato's philosophy because he was convinced that Aristotle was right to postulate that the soul is the principle of life in ensouled bodies and that the intellect is not an efficient but a Goal-Pointing and guiding principle. The World Soul, according to Alcinous too, is the entity which, immanent in the cosmos, is active demiurgically and productively, giving concrete shape to the forms after the example of the Intelligibilia in the transcendent Intellect. Alcinous' text clearly shows a deep infusion with the essential notions of Aristotelian philosophy. That is why we should reject the hypothesis that the Middle Platonist conception of the World Soul should be understood to follow from an acceptance by later Platonists of the Stoic doctrine of *Logos*.[57]

This line is also pursued in *Hermetic Corpus* 10.5 ("The Key"), where Ouranos and Kronos are presented as leaving their bodies in their sleep and

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[55] W. Deuse, *Untersuchungen zur Mittelplatonischen und Neuplatonischen Seelenlehre* (Wiesbaden 1983) 82; See Alt, "*Weltflucht*" 49–50, who concludes that this theme is a "Paradoxon" in Alcinous.

[56] Arist., *Metaph.* 1074B17–18, where the theme of a "sleeping god" is brought up; and *EE* 1219B19, where sleep is described as the inactivity of the soul.

[57] See Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 46: "another development characteristic of Middle Platonism, deriving not from the Old Academy but rather arising as a development from Stoicism, that is, the distinguishing of a first and second God. The distinction between a completely transcendent, self-intelligizing figure, and an active demiurgic one. The later Platonists adopted the Stoic *Logos* into their system as the active force of God in the world". See idem, *Alcinous*, xxxiii. *Contra* Dillon it can be argued that both the Stoic doctrine of *Logos* and the Middle Platonist doctrine of the World Soul resulted from Aristotle's criticism of Plato's theory of soul and his theory about the soul as *logos* principle in semen.

participating in the most beautiful contemplation.[58] It was Aristotle who had handed the Hermetic author the key to the mysteries of Gnosis.

In the same tradition Philo of Alexandria holds that first the transcendent Intellect brings forth the *Logos* and then the *Logos* vitalizes and produces the visible cosmos as a *Logos spermatikos*.[59]

Entirely parallel with this theme on a macrocosmic scale we find passages which refer to the "wakening" of an individual man's intellect. Characteristically, Philo describes how Abraham is "wakened as from a deep sleep" and then sees with "his soul's eye" the pure light instead of deep darkness. According to Philo, this happened when Abraham abjured the cosmic theology of the Chaldeans and received knowledge of the supreme, the truly transcendent God.[60] For Abraham this was not a migration to a foreign country but a return to his Fatherland.[61] The mistake of the Chaldeans was that they worshipped "the Powers" of God instead of God himself.[62]

The proclamation of the Hermetic apostle is: "cease your inebriation, intoxicated as you are by an irrational sleep".[63] The same motif is found in the *Excerpts from Theodotus*.[64]

W. Foerster made a good point when he argued that the "wake-up call" for mortals to strive after Knowledge forms the origin of Gnosticism.[65] But we should consider here that this concept builds on the philosophical foundation laid by Aristotle when he distinguished between the presence of soul as "sleeping" and as "wakened".

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[58] *CH* 10.5: ἧς οἱ δυνάμενοι πλέον τι ἀρύσασθαι τῆς θέας κατακοιμίζονται πολλάκις [δὲ] ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος εἰς τὴν καλλίστην ὄψιν ὥπερ Οὐρανὸς καὶ Κρόνος, οἱ ἡμέτεροι πρόγονοι, ἐντετυχήκασιν. See H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston ^{2}1963) 68–91. The author sees this as a fundamental characteristic of Gnosticism. He fails to note any connection with Greek philosophy. See also G.W. MacRae, "Sleeping and Waking in Gnostic texts", in U. Bianchi (ed.), *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo* (Leiden 1970) 496–507.

[59] Philo, *De opif. mund.* 16–25.

[60] Philo, *De Abr.* 60–72.

[61] Philo, *De Abr.* 62.

[62] Philo, *De Abr.* 69; *De opif. mund.* 7–8. See also A.P. Bos, "Philo of Alexandria: a Platonist in the Image and Likeness of Aristotle", *StudPhilon* 10 (1998) 66–86.

[63] *CH* 1.27: παύσασθε δὲ κραιπαλῶντες, θελγόμενοι ὕπνῳ ἀλόγῳ. See *CH* 4.4; 7.1–2; 10.15.

[64] Clem. Alex., *Exc.Theod.* 53.2: ὕπνος δὲ ἦν Ἀδὰμ ἡ λήθη τῆς ψυχῆς ἣν συνεῖχε μὴ διαλυθῆναι. Likewise *GosTruth* (NHC I,3) 22; *Ap.John* (NHC II,1) 31.5–25. The fact that this can be linked to "Adam's sleep" does not imply that the theme of sleep has a Jewish origin, as MacRae, "Sleeping and Waking", 498–489 suggests.

[65] W. Foerster, "Vom Ursprung der Gnosis", in K. Wessel (ed.), *Christentum am Nil* (Recklinghausen 1964) 124–130 at 129.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PASSIONS: PLUTARCH, POSIDONIUS AND GALEN

Francesco Becchi

Plutarch is an authoritative point of reference in ethics for the reaffirmation of the constitutive unity of man called into question by Epicurean materialism and by Chrysippean-Stoic panlogism. He exhibits a profound understanding of human nature and the human psyche: he is well aware that man, inclined toward virtue though he may be, because of the weakness and fragility of his nature,[1] is capable neither of achieving the good with only his good natural disposition nor of securing for himself amidst the shifting fortunes of life the self-sufficiency, immunity to pain, or inner tranquility that represent the source of happiness.[2] From the analysis of human behavior he conducts in his *Moralia* and *Lives* the conviction clearly emerges that nature, precise and ingenious though it be,[3] produces no character that is entirely good or unquestionably devoted to virtue,[4] which is the reason why it is difficult to find an individual whose life is entirely blameless and pure.

Plutarch acknowledges the existence of a naturally wicked perversion (ἔμφυτος κακία) that sometimes tends to cloak itself in goodness and to remain concealed even for long periods. It may manifest itself either gradually, as in the case of Philip, or suddenly and completely, as in the case of Sertorius. He makes clear, nonetheless, his conviction, in accordance with Platonic tradition, that certain anomalies and inconsistencies of character, such as certain forms of erroneous and defective behavior—above all in persons endowed with good natural qualities—should not be interpreted as the manifestations of a genuinely wicked nature; that these are, rather, the effects of a lack of virtue and of philosophical training. It is precisely this deficiency that allows empty opinions and false judgments, which lead to vile passions that are unworthy of a man, to seep in from without.

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[1] Plu., *Cleom.* 16.8.
[2] Plu., *De virt. et vit.* 101B–D.
[3] Plu., *De am. prol.* 495C.
[4] Plu., *Cim.* 2.4–5.

It follows that even a noble and good temperament, when uneducated, produces virtue without "science", and thus indulges in many unworthy actions amongst other, loftier ones, as occurs in agriculture when fruit grows spontaneously or when fertile soil is left uncultivated.[5] For Plutarch, then, natures that have not achieved a pure and perfect virtue (ἀρετὴ εἰλικρινής) grounded in a rational decision (κατὰ λόγον συνεστῶσα) are apt, alongside great virtues, to manifest great vices as well.[6]

That said, natural passion[7] is for Plutarch an essential prerequisite not only for ethical action[8] but also for civic and political activity. This is what prompts him to distance himself from ancient Stoicism, and in particular from Chrysippus, who reduces passions to processes of reason, as if all desires and furious outbursts, like virtues, were judgments. Passions, as if they were the chords and nerves of the soul, need to be tightened and relaxed in a very harmonious way[9] in order that they be guided by reason to a right and irreprehensible mean.[10] Without them it would be impossible to practice virtue, which is prized less as a possession than as action,[11] because it would be impossible to transfer judgments to works.[12] Morality is indeed a quality of the irrational part of soul shaped by habit, and virtue is an activity that presupposes right opinion and judgment.[13] For Plutarch, consequently, passions are not in themselves an evil, and their eradication is neither morally nor socially desirable.[14] Hence his criticism

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[5] Plu., *Arat*. 10.5; *Cor*. 1.3.

[6] Plu., *Demetr*. 1.7–8; *De sera num*. 552C–D. This is the origin for Plutarch, as for the Academic-Aristotelian school of the need to refine the natural temperament with λόγος, by incorporating moderation (τὸ μέτριον) into passion eliminating excess (τὸ ἄγαν). On the notion of virtue-*mesotes* see Plu., *De virt. mor*. 443C–D: τοῦ λόγου … οὐ βουλομένου τὸ πάθος ἐξαιρεῖν παντάπασιν … ἀλλ' ὅρον τινὰ καὶ τάξιν ἐπιτιθέντος αὐτῷ καὶ τὰς ἠθικὰς ἀρετάς, οὐκ ἀπαθείας οὔσας ἀλλὰ συμμετρίας παθῶν καὶ μεσότητας, ἐμποιοῦντος. On moderation, wherein lies above all the virtue of the political man, see Plu., *Cor*. 1.5, 15.4.

[7] For the natural passions, see Plu., *De tranq. an*. 465A.

[8] See Asp., *EN*, CAG XIX 1, Heylbut, 44.16–19: καὶ ἅμα τὸ ὀρεκτικὸν μόριον τῆς ψυχῆς ἐξελεῖν μὲν παντελῶς ἀμήχανον, κοσμῆσαι δὲ ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ λόγον ἔχον δυνατόν· εἴη δ' ἂν κεκοσμημένον ἐν τῇ τῶν παθῶν συμμετρίᾳ.

[9] Plu., *Per*. 15.2.

[10] Plu., *De virt. mor*. 444F–445A; *De vitios. pud*. 529D–E.

[11] Plu., *Per*. 2.3.

[12] For the impulse of passion that permits one to transfer judgments to operations, which can thus become actions, instilling at the irrational level the ethical virtues, which are an intermediacy (*mesotes*) between deficiency and excess, see Plu., *Quomod. quis suos*. 84B.

[13] On passions as the beginning of actions, see Plu., *An corp. affect*. 501 C–D.

[14] M. Vegetti, *L'etica degli antichi* (Rome–Bari 1989) 187.

of stoic *apatheia*,[15] an ideal that, in his view, is not only impracticable but also—were it practicable—harmful.[16]

This position on passion and *apatheia*, however, stands in almost total isolation within Plutarch's *oeuvre*, being confined to his theoretical essay *De virtute morali*. In the rest of the *Moralia* and in the *Vitae* passion is presented not as a constructive force essential to virtue but as a weakness of the soul (ἀσθένεια or ἀτονία),[17] and *apatheia* has been transformed from a deleterious ideal into something great and divine:

πάθος as useful and needed pulse		
De virt. mor.	452C	καθάπερ ὄρμημα τῷ λογισμῷ καὶ ὄχημα τὸ πάθος
	452D	λαβὰς … φιλοσοφίας … τὰ πάθη
	451D	πολὺ χρησιμώτερα τὰ τῶν παθῶν θρέμματα τῷ λογισμῷ συμπαρόντα καὶ συνεντείνοντα ταῖς ἀρεταῖς
	451D	ὁ θυμὸς (*sc.* συνεντείνει) τῇ ἀνδρείᾳ, μέτριος ὤν
	449F	διὸ καὶ νεῦρα τῆς ψυχῆς τὸν θυμὸν ὁ Πλάτων προσεῖπεν ὡς ἐπιτεινόμενόν τε πικρίᾳ καὶ πραότητι χαλώμενον
De ira	Fr. 148 Sdb.	τὸν θυμὸν ὡς σύμμαχον ἀρετῆς
πάθος as psychic illness		
De cap. ex inim. ut.	90C	τὰ κάκιστα τῶν παθῶν, οἷόν ἐστιν ἡ ὀργή
De superst.	165C	αἰσχρὰ μὲν δὴ πάντα τὰ ψυχῆς νοσήματα καὶ πάθη
	165C	τοῦτο δὴ τὸ κοινὸν ἔγκλημα παντὸς πάθους ἐστίν, ὅτι ταῖς πρακτικαῖς ὁρμαῖς ἐκβιαζόμενα (*sc.* τὰ πάθη) κατεπείγει καὶ συντείνει τὸν λογισμόν
De garr.	502E	τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοις νοσήμασι τῆς ψυχῆς, οἷον φιλαργυρίᾳ φιλοδοξίᾳ φιληδονίᾳ
	504E–F	τῶν δ' ἄλλων παθῶν καὶ νοσημάτων τὰ μέν ἐστιν ἐπικίνδυνα τὰ δὲ μισητὰ τὰ δὲ καταγέλαστα
De cohib. ir.	455E	διὸ καὶ (*sc.* ὁ θυμὸς) μισεῖται καὶ καταφρονεῖται μάλιστα τῶν παθῶν

[15] Plu., *Qu. Plat.* 9, 1009A–B: τοῦτο τέλος ἐστὶ τῆς τοῦ λόγου δυνάμεως, μεσότητας ἐν τοῖς πάθεσι ποιεῖν. See Plu., [*Vit. Hom.*] 135, *Moralia* VII, p. 408.7 ff. Bern.

[16] Plu., [*Cons. ad Apoll.*] 102C–D; *De virt. mor.* 443C.

[17] For the ἀσθένεια or "weakness" of the soul, a factor which for Plutarch is no less important than it was for the Stoics in the arousal of psychic affects, see Plu., *De tranq. an.* 468D, 476D. For the ἀτονία of the psyche, which resembles a physical constitution that can tolerate neither heat nor cold, see Plu., *De vitios. pud.* 535D.

πάθος as psychic illness		
De cohib. ir. (*cont.*)	457B–C	δι' ἀσθένειαν ὁ θυμός, οὐχὶ νεύροις, ὥς τις εἶπε, τῆς ψυχῆς ἐοικώς
	462F	τῶν ἄλλων παθῶν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ νοσημάτων
	462E	τὸν θυμὸν ὥσπερ θηρίον
	462F–463A	ἔοικε τῶν παθῶν πανσπερμία τις ὁ θυμὸς εἶναι
De ira	fr. 148 Sdb.	τὸ πολὺ δ' αὐτοῦ (*sc.* τοῦ θυμοῦ) καὶ τὸ πλεονάζον (ἐπιπολαιον codd.) ⟨σπουδάζοντες⟩ ἐκκρίνειν καὶ ἐκβάλλειν τῆς ψυχῆς, ὅπερ ὀργή τε καὶ πικρία καὶ ὀξυθυμία, νοσήματα ἥκιστα ταῖς ἀνδρείαις ψυχαῖς πρέποντα
De curios.	515C–D	ἐπεὶ τοίνυν ἔστι τινὰ πάθη νοσώδη καὶ βλαβερὰ καὶ χειμῶνα παρέχοντα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ σκότος, ἄριστον μὲν ἐξωθεῖν ταῦτα καὶ καταλύειν εἰς ἔδαφος … εἰ δὲ μή, μεταλαμβάνειν …
De inv. et od.	536E	ταῦτα (*sc.* φθόνος καὶ μῖσος) ὥσπερ νοσήματα
Stoic ἀπάθεια		
[*Cons. ad Apoll.*]	102CD	ἀπάθειαν, ἔξω τοῦ δυνατοῦ καὶ τοῦ συμφέροντος οὖσαν
De virt. mor.	443C	τοῦ λόγου … οὐ βουλομένου τὸ πάθος ἐχαιρεῖν παντάπασιν … οὔτε γὰρ δυνατὸν ουτ' ἄμεινον
Cons. ad uxor.	608C	οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἀπὸ δρυὸς οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης ἐγενόμην
Non poss.	1101AB	λέγουσι τὴν εἰς τὸ ἀπαθὲς καθεστῶσαν ἀλυπίαν ἀφ' ἑτέρου κακοῦ μείζονος ὑπάρχειν …
Academic ἀπάθεια		
Quomod. quis suos.	83E	ἡ παντελὴς ἀπάθεια μέγα καὶ θεῖον
De curios.	515C	ἄριστον μὲν ἐξωθεῖν ταῦτα (*sc.* τὰ πάθη νοσώδη καὶ βλαβερὰ)
Public.	6.5	ἀρετῆς ὕψος εἰς ἀπάθειαν ἐξέστησε ⟨αὐτοῦ⟩ τὴν ψυχήν
Phoc.	36.1	ἐθαύμαζον τὴν ἀπάθειαν καὶ μεγαλοψυχίαν τοῦ ἀνδρός (*i.e.* Φωκίωνος)
Cat. mi.	65.10	τοῦ Κάτωνος ἀπομιμεῖσθαι τὴν ἀπάθειαν
Dio	32.1	ἐκπλήττεσθαι τὴν ἀπάθειαν καὶ τὴν μεγαλοψυχίαν τοῦ Δίωνος
Lyc.	11.3	ὁ μὲν οὖν Λυκοῦργος οὐδὲν ἐνδοὺς πρὸς τὸ πάθος

This contradiction within Plutarch's works has not gone unnoticed. To justify, if not explain, it, some scholars have posited a dual personality of the author, who would be speaking at some times as a theologian, at others as a moral philosopher.[18] Others posit a twofold truth, one in his treatises, and another in his diatribes.[19]

These hypotheses are, in fact, nothing more than that. A careful reading of the passages on which they rest allows us to rule out the co-existence in Plutarch's writings of discreet theoretical and practical levels, at least as regards to the notion of passion and the ideal of *apatheia*. The proof lies in the fact that a theoretical work like the *De virtute morali*, where one would, in that case, expect to find a condemnation of passion and a defense of *apatheia*, Plutarch, instead, defends the passions as indispensable allies of reason[20] and condemns *apatheia* as an impracticable and, in any case, harmful ideal. Conversely, in such practical writings as the *De profectibus in virtute*, the *De cohibenda ira*, the *De tranquillitate animi*, the *De cupiditate divitiarum*, the *De invidia et odio*, the *De garrulitate* and the *De curiositate*, as well as the *Vitae*, passion is presented as a vice and a shameful disease of the soul that it would be best to root out and utterly destroy.[21] Moreover, the perfect *apatheia* (παντελὴς ἀπάθεια)[22] as an ideal that is great and divine,[23] and yet not inaccessible, at least to those who, like Lycurgus[24] or Publicola,[25] bring to their lives that high degree of perfection that men who are judged to be honest and good can attain.[26]

As I see it, beneath this apparent contradiction one can discern a coherent stance that can be justified and explained in terms of Plutarch's doctrine of the passions.[27] For Plutarch, passions are rooted in the body and never

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[18] D. Babut, *Plutarque et le stoïcisme* (Paris 1969) 318–333.

[19] J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism 80 BC to AD 220* (London 1977) 189.

[20] Plu., *De virt. mor*. 452C–D.

[21] Plu., *De curios*. 515C.

[22] To be understood in the Academic sense, see Anon., *In Arist. EN*, CAG XX, Heylbut, 127.7–8 and 128.4–5. On this notion, see F. Becchi, "*Apatheia* e *metriopatheia* in Plutarco", in A. Casanova (ed.), *Plutarco e l'età ellenistica. Atti del Convegno internazionale di Studi* (*Firenze 23–24 Settembre 2004*) (Florence 2005) 385–400.

[23] Plu., *Quomod. quis suos*. 83E; *Public*. 6.5.

[24] Plu., *Lyc*. 11.3.

[25] Plu., *Public*. 6.5.

[26] Plu., *Praec. ger. reipub*. 800B; *Public*. 6.5, 23.3.

[27] This consideration could also be extended to other fundamental notions of Plutarch's ethics such as, for example, virtue, which is defined on the one hand in an Aristotelic manner, as a permanent disposition of the irrational component of the soul (*De virt. mor*. 443D), but on the other hand as a perfect art and right judgement (*Demetr*. 1.4). On virtue as right and indelible opinion, see Pl., *R*. 430A.

represent a perversion of reason. Convinced, as he is, that wickedness does not come to a man only from the outside, as the ancient Stoics believed, but that most men have it on their own.[28] It did not escape him, nonetheless, how much truth there was both in the Platonic doctrine that considers ignorance the most serious of illnesses[29] and in the Stoic doctrine of the perversion (διαστροφή) of human nature, which is subjected to a constant social catachesis and exposed to the seductive power of representations (φαντασίαι).[30]

Therefore, alongside natural affects, Plutarch recognizes the existence of a different set of passions that stem from a weakness of the mind, which lacks the strength (τόνος) to stand firm against the call of those external representations and consequently lets empty judgments from outside infiltrate it; and formulates false judgments to which passions that know no limits attach themselves. These passions, sparked by an error of the psyche (αἱ μετὰ πάθους διαστροφαὶ τῆς ψυχῆς),[31] are the most insidious because there is no perception of them,[32] insomuch as the very organ appointed to evaluate them is itself ill.[33] Consequently, while as a natural impulse of the soul passion is a small matter (μικρὸν τὸ φυσικὸν πάθος)[34] and is never in and of itself dishonorable, as the effect of folly it becomes an illness that knows no limits, a disease of the soul and a full-fledged vice (παντελὴς κακία)[35] unworthy of a judicious man.[36]

Anger provides an instructive illustration of this dichotomy. In the *De ira* it is associated with the nerves of the soul[37] and is considered an ally of virtue (τὸν θυμὸν ὡς σύμμαχον ἀρετῆς),[38] as it is in the *De virtute morali*;[39]

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[28] Plu., *An corp. affect.* 500D–E.

[29] Pl., *Tim.* 86B: νόσον μὲν δὴ ψυχῆς ἄνοιαν συγχωρητέον; 88; *Tht.* 176C; *R.* 354B: κακία … καὶ ἀμαθία … σοφία καὶ ἀρετή; *Prt.* 357C.

[30] *SVF* 3.228–236.

[31] Plu., *Quomod. adul.* 64E.

[32] Plu., *De virt. mor.* 445D–E: … τὴν αἴσθησιν ἀποβάλλει τῶν ἁμαρτανομένων.

[33] Plu., *An corp. affect.* 500E.

[34] Plu., *Cons. ad uxor.* 609E–F: μικρῷ τῷ φυσικῷ πάθει πολὺ συγκεραννύμενον τὸ πρὸς κενὴν δόξαν ἄγρια ποιεῖ καὶ μανικὰ καὶ δυσεξίλαστα ⟨τὰ⟩ πένθη. See Cic., *Tusc.* III 83: *hoc detracto, quod totum est voluntarium …, morsus tamen et contractiuncula quaedam animi relinquetur. Hanc dicant sane naturalem …*

[35] Plu., *De virt. mor.* 445D.

[36] Plu., *Per.* 39.2.

[37] Pl., *R.* 411B. See Plu., *De virt. mor.* 449F.

[38] Plu., fr. 148.15–16 Sandb.

[39] Plu., *De virt. mor.* 451D.

whereas a surfeit of anger (τὸ πολὺ δ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ πλεονάζον),[40] which springs from a weakness of the soul and is not comparable to the nerves of the soul,[41] is defined in the *De ira*[42] as an entirely unseemly illness and in the *De cohibenda ira*[43] as a mixture of seeds drawn from all the passions (τῶν παθῶν πανσπερμία), insomuch as it is the most hated and scorned of them all.

From the pages of the *Moralia*, where Plutarch reflects on the evils and bad habits that afflict the rich and restless aristocracy of his time,[44] and from the pages of the *Vitae*, in which he analyzes the behavior of important personages of Greek and Roman history, it emerges that the true evil that has conditioned and, continues to condition, mankind lies not so much in the natural passions rooted in the body (the activation of a natural mechanism), as in ignorance and mental weakness, which, by leaving one a prey to empty opinions and false and irrational judgments, transforms a natural affect into a disease of the psyche and thus generates insatiable and untrammelled passions in men who are not armed with reason and education. These men without a solid foundation, finding nothing within themselves to love and driven by empty opinions, clutch at external goods[45] and never succeed in satisfying the voracious passions of their souls.[46] This is why if fortune is favorable to those deprived of instruction and knowledge (οἱ δ' ἀπαίδευτοι καὶ ἀμαθεῖς),[47] giving them wealth, power, fame or a high position, those without education will inevitably fall to ruin from that height, stricken with dizziness like epileptics.[48]

The first and foremost charge that Plutarch seems to level at the men of his day[49] is, therefore,[50] that they seem to have filled their minds with

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[40] Plu., fr. 148.18–19 Sandb. See Plu., *De gen. Socr.* 579F: οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄκοντες ὑπὸ τῶν παθῶν τούτων ἁλίσκονται δι' ἀπειρίαν ἢ δι' ἀσθένειαν.

[41] Plu., *De cohib. ir.* 463B.

[42] Plu., fr. 148.20–21 Sandb.: νοσήματα ἥκιστα ταῖς ἀνδρείαις ψυχαῖς πρέποντα.

[43] Plu., *De cohib. ir.* 455E, 457BD, 460D, 462F–463A.

[44] See Plu., *Luc.* 39.2.

[45] Plu., *Sol.* 7.3–6.

[46] Plu., *Mar.* 46.5. See, Plu., *Praec. ger. reipub.* 798C: πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ὑποκείσθω πολιτείᾳ καθάπερ ἔδαφος βέβαιον καὶ ἰσχυρὸν ἡ προαίρεσις ἀρχὴν ἔχουσα κρίσιν καὶ λόγον, ἀλλὰ μὴ πτοίαν ὑπὸ δόξης κενῆς ἢ φιλονεικίας τινὸς ἢ πράξεων ἑτέρων ἀπορίας.

[47] On ignorance, see Plu., *Agis* 7.6.

[48] Plu., *Ad princ. inerud.* 782E–F.

[49] Plu., *Ad princ. inerud.* 780A.

[50] Plu., *Brut. anim.* 986E.

false and absurd opinions, and that because of this mental poverty (πενία ψυχική)[51] they have strayed so far from nature[52] that their bad habits,[53] which have constituted a second nature,[54] make it impossible for them not to fall into error.

Anti-stoicism is undoubtedly a constant companion of the Chaeronean throughout his evolution, so it hardly seems plausible that he should at some point become a standard bearer, consciously or unconsciously, for those philosophers whom he has always openly opposed; and yet the anti-stoic Plutarch would seem to subscribe to doctrines bearing an unmistakably Stoic imprint. Let us see how it is possible to resolve this apparent contradiction.

Plutarch is polemical towards Chrysippus primarily because he sought to excise from human life an irrational factor like passion, considering it an error of the mind. If, however, Plutarch criticizes the Chrysippean doctrine of affects, which views any passion a mistake, he brings together the conception of passion of the Platonic tradition[55] and the Stoic doctrine of διαστροφή,[56] discerning in mental weakness (ἀσθένεια)[57] of an important factor in bringing about the onset of the passions and of vice, and drawing a distinction between "somatic" passions, linked to corporeal temperaments, and "psychic" passions, the effect of empty opinions and false judgments.

For Plutarch too, as for Posidonius and Galen, men whose outbursts of passion are not violent and whose rational part is by nature neither weak nor incapable of understanding, may be constrained to live under the yoke

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[51] Plu., *De cup. div*. 524E.

[52] Plu., *De am. prol*. 497D.

[53] Plu., *De es. carn*. 996B, 996D–E: ἀδύνατον ἤδη διὰ τὴν συνήθειαν τὸ ἀναμάρτητον. On the role of habit in Plu., see *De lib. ed*. 2C, 3B; *De rect. rat. aud*. 37F, 47B–C; *De virt. mor*. 443B–C; *De cohib. ir*. 459B; *De garr*. 511E; *De curios*. 520D; *De ser. num*. 551C; *De gen. Socr*. 584E, 585C; *De soll. anim*. 959F; on habit as a sort of "second nature", see H. Diller, "Die Hellenen-Barbaren Antithese im Zeitalter der Perserkriege", in *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique*, VIII (Grecs et barbares) (Vandœuvres-Genève 1962) 37–68. On reason that, straying from the right path, has left no clear and visible trace of its true nature, see Plu., *De am. prol*. 493D–E.

[54] Plu., *De tu. san*. 132A. Something has happened to them that is very similar to what happens to oil when it loses its essence due to perfumers.

[55] For Plato (*R*. 444E) vice is an illness and a weakness (κακία δὲ νόσος τε … καὶ ἀσθένεια).

[56] For Posidonius (fr. 416 Th. = 169.77–117 E.-K. = Gal., *PHP* V, 320–322 De Lacy) passions find their impulse (ὁρμή) not only in the stirring of the faculty of passion (ἐπὶ τῇ κινήσει τοῦ παθητικοῦ), but also in the weakness of the faculty of reason in the psyche (ἀσθενήσαντος περὶ τὴν κρίσιν τοῦ λογιστικοῦ).

[57] Plu., *De tranq. an*. 468D. See Plu., fr. 121.6–7 Sandb.: ἡ δ' ἀνθρώπων ἰσχὺς ὁ ψυχῆς ἐστι λογισμός; Alex. Aphr., *Fat*. 180.7–8 Bruns: ἡ προαίρεσις, τὸ ἴδιον ἔργον τῶν ἀνθρώπων; 211.17: ἀνθρώπου δὲ ἡ φρόνησις ἀρετή.

of passions due to ignorance and faulty morals.[58] Inner wickedness[59] is a question not only of the excess or deficiency of passion as a faculty (which necessitates regulation) but also, and above all, one of the feebleness of the faculty of reason: from the latter stem the empty opinions and false judgments that produce endless passions and faulty morals. Therefore, Plutarch, like the other intellectuals of his day, considers the primary and most serious disease of the psyche to be the senselessness and ignorance that afflict the mind.[60]

This feebleness and mental poverty, and this distortion (διαστροφή) of the mind, give rise to what Plutarch calls "illnesses of the psyche, which constitute a full-blown vice, which is not suited to men of sound mind".[61] Passions like insatiability (ἀπληστία) and greed (πλεονεξία), wrath (ὀργή or θυμός) and suffering (λύπη), the craving for wealth (φιλοχρηματία or φιλοπλουτία) or for glory (φιλοτιμία / φιλοδοξία), as well as the desire to excel and to dominate are illnesses that not only afflict the society of his time but also brought to ruin many eminent men of the past.[62]

Therefore, when Plutarch writes that all distempers and emotion of the soul are disgraceful (αἰσχρὰ μὲν δὴ πάντα τὰ ψυχῆς νοσήματα καὶ πάθη)[63] or that are certain unhealthy and injurious states of mind which allow winter and darkness to enter the soul (τινὰ πάθη νοσώδη καὶ βλαβερὰ καὶ χειμῶνα παρέχοντα τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ σκότος),[64] he does not contradict what he writes in the *De virtute morali*, because he is not referring to natural passions but to those unhealthy passions contrary to nature, which arise from errors of a mind[65] whose ignorance and weakness leave it open to empty opinions from outside (τὰ ἐπείσακτα πάθη).[66]

Passion as an error of the mind is also the root of that greed and boundless insatiability that spawns the true evil of the century, which is affliction, a

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58 Posid., fr. 169. 77–117 E.-K. = Gal., *PHP* V 5.18, 320–322 De Lacy = V 463–465 K.

59 Plu., *An. corp. affect*. 500E. On the requirement that there be an evil within that makes what comes from outside commiserable, see Plu., *An vitios. ad inf. suff*. 499E–F.

60 Gal., *Anim.Pass*. II I 5, p. [69] Magnaldi; *De indol*. § 51–61 Boudon-Millot & Jouanna; Plu., *De garr*. 510C τῶν γὰρ παθῶν κρίσει καὶ ἀσκήσει περιγινόμεθα, προτέρα δ' ἡ κρίσις ἐστιν; *De cohib. ira* 457D; *An corp. affect*. 500E; Luc., *Nigrinus* 3[8].20; *Hermotimus* 20[70].7. On the senselessness and ignorance that afflict the mind, see F. Becchi, "La psicopatologia di Galeno", in D. Manetti (ed.), *Studi sul De indolentia di Galeno* (Pisa–Rome 2012) 23–31 at 24.

61 Plu., *De virt. mor*. 445D–E.

62 Plu., *Fab*. 10.4.

63 Plu., *De superst*. 165C.

64 Plu., *De curios*. 515C.

65 Plu., *De curios*. 516A; *De cohib. ir*. 456F.

66 Plu., *Brut. anim*. 998C; *Cons. ad uxor*. 609E–F; *De exil*. 600E.

vice that seems terrible to everyone because it breaks the psyche and fills it with pain in the same way that exertion fells the body.[67]

In this regard, the analysis performed in the *Vitae* shows how many eminent personages of history were driven to folly and to delirium not by the impetus of their desires and passions—of which they indeed had many by nature—but by that weakness of the psyche and inanity that generated insatiable passions like wrath;[68] the lust for wealth,[69] for glory[70] or for honors;[71] and the drive to excel and to dominate (τὸ φιλόπρωτον / τὸ φιλόνικον),[72] where excess is always dangerous and ultimately fatal,[73] as befell Demetrius,[74] Marius,[75] Crassus,[76] and Antonius,[77] or as befell Alcibiades[78] and Coriolanus, convinced as he was that daring and ambition, winning and dominating by any means and over all others, were tokens of valor and greatness and not of weakness, which permits the outpouring of wrath, itself an expression of pain[79] as if it were a tumor.[80]

The best thing is that these passions, which represent errors and diseases of the mind brought on by inanity (ἄγνοια / ἄνοια / ἀμαθία / ἀβελτερία)[81] and by a lack of good sense (ἀβουλία),[82] be avoided (φυγεῖν μὲν ἴσως ἄριστον), or rooted out and destroyed to their foundations (ἄριστον μὲν ἐξωθεῖν ταῦτα καὶ καταλύειν εἰς ἔδαφος).[83]

Through habit that which is against nature may become nature, as it were,[84] and it thus becomes difficult,[85] if not impossible, to completely erad-

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[67] Plu., *De exil.* 600D.

[68] On wrath as an expression of pain, see Plu., *De cohib. ir.* 456F, 457B–C; *Cor.* 15.5, 21.1.

[69] For the φιλοπλουτία as αἴσχιστον νόσημα, see Plu., *Agis* 13.1.

[70] Plu., *An sen.* 788E; *Fab.* 10.4; *Agis* 2.1.

[71] For ambition (φιλοτιμία) as a deplorable passion, see Plu., *Comp. Cor.—Alc.* 4.7. For the lack of ambition as no small resource for the πραότης which is a distinctive feature of a political man, see Plu., *Comp. Arist.—Cat. mai.* 5.4.

[72] Plu., *An sen.* 788E; *Alc.* 2.1; *Crass.* 27.6.

[73] Plu., *Agis* 2.3.

[74] Plu., *Demetr.* 30.4, 32.8, 52.3.

[75] Plu., *Mar.* 2.3–4, 34.6, 45.6.

[76] Plu., *Crass.* 27.6.

[77] Plu., *Anton.* 17.3, 25.1, 36.1.

[78] Plu., *Alc.* 2.1.

[79] Plu., *Cor.* 21.1.

[80] Plu., *Cor.* 15.5. See Plu., *De cohib. ir.* 456F, 457B–C.

[81] Plu., *De curios.* 516A.

[82] Plu., *Crass.* 27.6.

[83] Plu., *De curios.* 515B–C.

[84] Plu., *De tu. san.* 132A: τὸ ἔθος τρόπον τινὰ φύσις τοῦ παρὰ φύσιν γέγονεν. See Plu., *De curios.* 515C.

[85] On the possibility of eradicating the maladies of the soul, see Plu., *De garr.* 510C–D: τῶν

icate vice[86] from the soul and achieve complete impassiveness (ἡ παντελὴς ἀπάθεια), which is great and divine thing. In such cases, however, it will be a notable sign of satisfactory progress even if one has succeeded in stripping away the excesses and spikes of vice.[87] It will thus be possible to attain that moderation (ἐπιείκεια or μετριοπάθεια) and that mildness (πραότης παθῶν)[88] which together with μεγαλοψυχία and μεγαλοφροσύνη helped to make men such as Lycurgus,[89] Solon,[90] Pericles,[91] Fabius Maximus[92] and Cato Uticensis[93] or women like Cornelia,[94] the mother of the Gracchi, and Plutarch's own wife, the wise Timoxena,[95] so marvelously admirable.

To conclude, Plutarch, polemical though he is toward Chrysippean theory, which makes of every affect an error (πᾶν … πάθος ἁμαρτία κατ' αὐτούς),[96] acknowledges the existence of errors of the mind,[97] foreshadowing that distinction between passions and errors that Galen will draw not long afterwards in the *De animi passionibus et erroribus*, where he writes: ἐγὼ δ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο πρῶτον … διώρισα, τὰ μὲν ἁμαρτήματα κατὰ ψευδῆ δόξαν εἰπὼν γίγνεσθαι, τὸ δὲ πάθος κατά τιν' ἄλογον ἐν ἡμῖν δύναμιν ἀπειθοῦσαν τῷ λόγῳ.[98]

γὰρ παθῶν κρίσει καὶ ἀσκήσει περιγινόμεθα, προτέρα δ' ἡ κρίσις ἐστίν … ὥστε τοῦτο πρῶτον ἴαμα καὶ φάρμακόν ἐστι τοῦ πάθους, ὁ τῶν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ γινομένων αἰσχρῶν καὶ ὀδυνηρῶν ἐπιλογισμός. On the difficulty of the task of freeing onself entirely of passions, see Plu., *De cohib. ir*. 462F; *Praec. ger. reipub*. 800B: εἰ μὴ ῥᾴδιον ἀπαλλάξαι παντάπασι τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν κακίαν; *Philop*. 9.6–7.

86 Plu., *Praec. ger. reipub*. 800B; *Philop*. 9.6–7.

87 Plu., *Quomod. quis suos*. 83E–84A.

88 On the πραότης as a sign of satisfactory progress (προκοπῆς … σημεῖον), which blunts the excesses and barbs of passions by guiding them back to their natural proportion, see Plu., *De aud*. 37A: ἀλυπία καὶ πραότης παθῶν καὶ διάθεσις ψυχῆς τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ὁρίζουσα; *Quomod. quis suos* 78B, 80B, 84A; *Coni. praec*. 144E; *De Alex. fort*. 332C; *De cohib. ir*. 453B, 458C: πραότητος καὶ μετριοπαθείας; *De frat. am*. 489C: ἡ φύσις ἡμῖν ἔδωκε πραότητα καὶ μετριοπαθείας ἔκγονον ἀνεξικακίαν; *Adv. Col*. 1119C: μετὰ πραότητος καὶ μετριοπαθείας. On πραότης as μόριον ἀρετῆς see Plu., *De ser. num*. 551C. Among characters of the *Vitae* that were conspicuous for their mildness and magnanimity, see *Fab*. 18; *Pelop*. 26.8; *Alex*. 4.8; *Cat. min*. 14.4; *Phoc*. 36.2; *Dio* 32.1; *Artax*. 1.1. For πραότης as a political virtue, see Plu., *Cor*. 15.4; *Comp. Arist.—Cat. mai*. 5.4. On the concept of πραότης in the *Vitae*, see H.M. Martin, "The Concept of πραότης in Plutarch's Lives", *GRBS* 3 (1960) 65–73; Becchi, "Apatheia e metriopatheia", 396 n. 108. On behavior according to moral rectitude, whose right measure distinguishes it from base behavior, see Plu., *Ages*. 36.4; [*Vit. Hom*.] 135, *Moralia* VII, 408. 11–13 Bern.

89 Plu., *Lyc*. 11.6.

90 Plu., *Sol*. 27.1, 8.

91 Plu., *Per*. 39.1.

92 Plu., *Fab*. 1.5, 3.7, 10.2, 24.6.

93 Plu., *Cat. mi*. 14.4.

94 Plu., *Tib. Gracch*. 19.1–4.

95 Plu., *Cons. ad uxor*. 608B–D.

96 Plu., *De virt. mor*. 449D.

97 Plu., *Per*. 39.2.

98 Gal., *Anim.Pass*. I 1, 3 p. [4] Magnaldi.

THE ADVENTITIOUS MOTION OF THE SOUL (PLU., *DE STOIC. REPUGN.* 23, 1045B–F) AND THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN ARISTO OF CHIOS AND THE MIDDLE ACADEMY*

Raúl Caballero

1. *The Academic Philosophers against the Stoic Theory of Intermediate Action*

In a previous work[1] I argued for the academic hypothesis in an attempt to identify those mysterious philosophers (τινες τῶν φιλοσόφων) who have provided a wide account of the so-called "adventitious faculty of the soul" (ἡ ἐπελευστικὴ δύναμις τῆς ψυχῆς).[2] As it is described in chapter 23 of Plutarch's *On Stoic self-contradictions*, this kind of motion (ἐπελευστικήν τινα κίνησιν) takes place in the commanding part of the soul and has the power to release impulses from external causes.[3]

In order to exemplify how that happens, Plutarch shows that the adventitious motion plays an important role mainly (μάλιστα) when we have to

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* I am grateful to Mr. David Wilson for his extensive assistance in checking the English text of this paper.

[1] R. Caballero, "La doctrina de las ἐπελεύσεις y la libertad de indiferencia: de Aristón de Quíos a Arcesilao (Plu., *De Stoic. repugn.* 23, 1045B–F)", en F. Frazier & D.F. Leão (eds), *Tychè et Pronoia. La marche du monde selon Plutarque* (Coimbra 2010) 13–38.

[2] The academic hypothesis has been suggested by D.N. Sedley in A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, I: *Translations of the Principal Sources with Philosophical Commentary* (Cambridge 1987) 338–339: "The Academics are more promising candidates. Criticism of Stoic determinism, and facing the Stoics with problems over apparent 'indiscernibles', were well-known Academic preoccupations. If this is so, the position Chrysippus opposes will not have been an official school doctrine, but a problem and solution canvassed by Academics in order to discomfit the Stoics". On the other hand, E. Spinelli, *Sesto Empirico. Contro gli etici* (Naples 1995) 230–233, has reconstructed the controversy between Stoics and Academics regarding the indifferent things, including the indiscernible ones.

[3] Plu., *De Stoic. repugn.* 1045B: Τοῦ κατηναγκάσθαι δοκοῦντες ὑπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν αἰτιῶν ταῖς ὁρμαῖς ἀπόλυσιν πορίζειν ἔνιοι τῶν φιλοσόφων ἐπελευστικήν τινα κίνησιν ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ κατασκευάζουσιν, ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπαραλλάκτων μάλιστα γινομένην ἔκδηλον· ὅταν γὰρ δυοῖν ἴσον δυναμένων καὶ ὁμοίως ἐχόντων θάτερον ᾖ λαβεῖν ἀνάγκη, μηδεμιᾶς αἰτίας ἐπὶ θάτερον ἀγούσης τῷ μηδὲν τοῦ ἑτέρου διαφέρειν, ἡ ἐπελευστικὴ δύναμις αὕτη τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπίκλισιν ἐξ αὑτῆς λαβοῦσα διέκοψε τὴν ἀπορίαν.

make a choice between two items that look identical. For example, if one has to choose between two interchangeable drachmas, although one is a true coin and the other a false one, it would be very difficult to make a choice, because each one of those drachmas produces equal impulses in the soul and one does not have any reason to prefer one rather than the other. Nevertheless, the fact is that choice is made spontaneously and no one remains at an impasse (ἀπορία), even if one is not able to say why one has taken this coin and not that one. Anyone can try: everybody will see immediately that, in this case, no one becomes the famous Buridan's ass.[4] But, if the external causes (that is to say, the two drachmas) are not enough to explain the choice, then it means that there is within us an adventitious faculty that takes from itself an inclination towards something and avoids the danger of inaction.

Who are these intriguing philosophers so elusively mentioned by Plutarch? Until now, commentators have proposed three mutually exclusive solutions to this question: either the Stoic Aristo of Chios,[5] or the Epicureans and their theory of *clinamen*,[6] or finally the Academics. The main goal of this paper is not to argue against the two former interpretations of the adventitious faculty of the soul, as I have already undertaken in two previous works,[7] but to show that the Academic hypothesis is the most consistent with what it is known about the criteria of action described by the Middle Academy (Arcesilaus and his disciples) in the course of his controversy with

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[4] According to this famous paradox, which makes fun of the statement that choice always depends on well-founded reasons, a hungry ass, positioned midway between identical bundles of hay, would starve if it had to choose among them on reasonable grounds. There is no example of this paradox in John Buridan's work (ca. 1300–1361), but it was most likely assigned to him since he understood freedom as a faculty of delaying choice regarding whatever appears to be uncertain. About the history of the problem of Buridan's ass, see N. Rescher, "Choice without Preference: the Problem of 'Buridan's Ass'", *KantStud* 51 (1959–1960) 142–175.

[5] See O.R. Rieth, *Grundbegriffe der stoischen Ethik: eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Berlin 1933) 105–108; G.R. Boys-Stones, "The *epeleustikè dunamis* in Aristo's Psychology of Action", *Phronesis* 41 (1996) 75–94.

[6] See H. Cherniss, *Plutarch's Moralia*, XIII 2 (London–Cambridge 1976) 508–509 n. a; M. Casevitz & D. Babut, *Plutarque, Oeuvres Morales* XV 1. Traité 70: Sur les contradictions stoïciennes; Traité 71: Synopsis du traité "Que les Stoïciens tiennent des propos plus paradoxaux que les poètes" (Paris 2004) 220–221 (n. 299).

[7] Caballero, "Indiferencia", 13–15. For a systematic refutation of the epicurean interpretation, see R. Caballero, "Entre la necesidad del destino y la libertad del átomo: el *clinamen* epicúreo y la libertad de indiferencia (Plu., *Stoic. rep.* 23, 1045B–F)", in A. Pérez Jiménez & I. Calero Secall (eds), Δῶρον Μνημοσύνης. *Miscelánea de estudios ofrecidos a Mª Ángeles Durán López* (Zaragoza 2011) 69–82.

the early Stoics (Zeno and his disciples). Moreover, in the second section of this paper I shall try to show how, from Arcesilaus to Carneades, it is possible to find a similar way to explain a wise person's free action, which is aimed at breaking the chain of causes involved in the Stoic notion of fate.

It is well known that Academic philosophers employed many arguments against the Stoic theory of knowledge, but several of these arguments were dealing with the impossibility of having cognitive presentations (καταληπτικαὶ φαντασίαι) of indiscernible objects (τὰ ἀπαράλλακτα), because the sense organs are not able to distinguish among them. Any assent—the sort of mental approval that the Stoics called συγκατάθεσις—to those kinds of impressions were, as the Academics argued against the Stoics, a continuing source of error and confusion and called into question the claim that the Stoic sage is free from opinions (ἀδόξαστος).[8] So, for Arcesilaus all the presentations are non cognitive (ἀκατάληπτα), because for every true presentation there may be a false one that is indistinguishable from the true one. Thus, the best thing that the Stoic sage could do is what the Academic sage actually does: to suspend judgement (ἐπέχειν, ἐποχή).

The Stoics reacted to this criticism by stressing the fact that suspension of judgement makes it absolutely impossible to perform actions in everyday life. This is just what happened to Pyrrho.[9] On this point, I think that Arcesilaus had replied to the Stoics in two ways: firstly, he has gone on the offensive by showing that in fact it is the Stoics who are really unable to achieve actions in some circumstances; then, he has been on the defensive by explaining how, even without assent, the Academic sage actually lives and is involved in actions. This last response is better known, as will be seen below, but the first response has not been widely studied yet, since our sources are lacking or provide few scattered accounts. In this paper I would like to reconstruct the Middle Academy's offensive strategy regarding the problem of inaction and to show that the main arguments here involved are much related to an Academic interpretation of the adventitious motion of the soul.

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[8] See A.M. Ioppolo, *Opinione e scienza. Il dibattito tra stoici e accademici nel III e nel II secolo a. C.* (Naples 1986) 78–85; M.L. Chiesara, *Historia del escepticismo griego* (Spanish transl.; Madrid 2007 [Turin 2004]) 48–53; H. Thorsrud, *Ancient Scepticism* (Los Angeles 2009) 45–50; Caballero, "Indiferencia", 21–23.

[9] D.L. 9.62: Ἀκόλουθος δ' ἦν καὶ τῷ βίῳ, μηδὲν ἐκτρεπόμενος μηδὲ φυλαττόμενος, ἅπαντα ὑφιστάμενος, ἀμάξας, εἰ τύχοι, καὶ κρημνοὺς καὶ κύνας καὶ ὅσα ⟨τοιαῦτα⟩ μηδὲν ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν ἐπιτρέπων.

I think, therefore, that the Arcesilean argument over indiscernibles posed a challenge not only to the Stoic theory of knowledge, but also to the ethical doctrine of intermediate actions. It is known that in Zeno's thinking such actions are those that all human beings perform in their progress towards virtue and concern the use of indifferent things. Indeed, orthodox Stoicism has claimed that there are degrees of indifference too. Firstly, there are things that are completely indifferent, in the sense that they can generate neither attraction nor repulsion: for example, to have an even or odd number of hairs on the head and so on. But there are also indifferent things that excite attraction or aversion, because they are connatural or totally foreign to our nature: these are the well-known preferred and non-preferred indifferent things that tradition attributes to Zeno. According to the founder of the Stoa, then, the key motive for man's behavior in the intermediate field between virtue and vice is nature, i.e., the choice of something that can promote health, integrity of the senses, economic security, etc.[10]

In my opinion, the Academic assault against the Stoic theory of intermediate actions was as follows. When the alleged clarity and evidence of our presentations are challenged by Sceptic arguments, not only Stoic science becomes absolutely impossible, but also some everyday actions in life, such as making choices between preferred indifferent things, cannot be performed. The Stoic sage often ends in a deadlock (ἀπορία) when faced by several preferred things that are indiscernible from each other. For, according to Zeno, impulse leads to action only if followed by free assent given to cognitive presentation.[11] But what Arcesilaus is aiming to point out here is that Stoic psychology of action is completely useless and harmful when facing indiscernibles: in these conditions, Stoic sage is often forced to give no assent, or at least to delay it, to the extent that Zeno himself ought to have acknowledged that the Stoics must withhold assent (ἀσυγκατάθεσις)

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[10] See Cic., *Acad. post.* 1.36–37 (= *SVF* 1.191): *Cetera autem etsi nec bona nec mala essent tamen alia secundum naturam dicebat alia naturae esse contraria; his ipsis alia interiecta et media numerabat. quae autem secundum naturam essent ea sumenda et quadam aestimatione dignanda docebat, contraque contraria; neutra autem in mediis relinquebat, in quibus ponebat nihil omnino esse momenti*. See *SVF* 1.192–196.

[11] This seems have been the genuine Zeno's psychology of action, where the sequence of psychical motions (presentation, impulse, assent, action) is not the same as what was held later by Chrysippus (presentation, assent = impulse, action). At least, the Arcesilean criticism to Zeno (Plu., *Adv. Col.* 1122B–D and Cic., *De fat.* 40) echoes the first sequence: on this problem, see A.M. Ioppolo, "Presentation and Assent: a Physical and Cognitive Problem in Early Stoicism", *CQ* 40 (1990) 433–449; Chiesara, *Escepticismo*, 55–56.

not only to false presentations, as he used to recommend, but also to those that, while clear and distinct, do not differ from each other at all.[12]

Arcesilaus might have argued that such circumstances are not so sporadic in daily life and so involve a great danger of inaction for the Stoic sage. The biographical anecdotes regarding several disciples of Zeno, such as Aristo and Sphaerus, who happened to give assent to indiscernible presentations, showed that the model of the Stoic wise man does not exist anywhere, but also indirectly suggested that, if they had been true wise men (which they are supposed to be), they would have done nothing at all: by withholding assent, Aristo would not have given the money back to either twin and Sphaerus would not have eaten neither the wax pomegranates nor the real ones. In these situations, the Stoic sage is condemned to an almost tragic dilemma: either to stop being sage or to renounce action.[13]

Nevertheless, Zeno and his disciples (Perseus, Aristo, etc.) have strongly replied that there are no two things which are actually identical in the world, and so the special features of the indiscernibles—and of their presentations—, while difficult to grasp, are not impossible to apprehend after a gradual process of becoming familiar with the objects.[14] But the Academics might have answered: "Yes, but what does one do in certain situations of daily life, where one has to decide without thinking at all? Imagine, just supposing, you must choose immediately between two identical drachmas and the experts are divided over whether this is a real coin or a fake one: what would you do? Now, suppose that an umpire has to decide to which of both runners he will give the winner's palm if they have run a dead heat (in those days there were no photo-finish cameras!): what would you do then?"[15] The definitive solution found by Stoicism to this challenge did not occur until Chrysippus and it was transmitted by Plutarch in the second section

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[12] See Cic., *Luc.* 57.2–6: *Quin etiam concedam illum ipsum sapientem, de quo omnis hic sermo est, **cum ei res similes occurrant** quas non habeat dinotatas, retenturum adsensum nec umquam ulli viso adsensurum nisi quod tale fuerit quale falsum esse non possit.*

[13] See D.L. 7.162: (Ἀρίστων) μάλιστα δὲ προσεῖχε Στωικῷ δόγματι τῷ τὸν σοφὸν ἀδόξαστον εἶναι. πρὸς ὃ Περσαῖος ἐναντιούμενος διδύμων ἀδελφῶν τὸν ἕτερον ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ παρακαταθήκην δοῦναι, ἔπειτα τὸν ἕτερον ἀπολαβεῖν· καὶ οὕτως **ἀπορούμενον** διήλεγξεν. The anecdote of Sphaerus and the wax pomegranates may be found in D.L. 7.177.

[14] See Cic., *Luc.* 57.6–10: *Sed et ad ceteras res habet quandam artem qua vera a falsis possit distinguere, et ad similitudines istas usus adhibendus est: ut mater geminos internoscit consuetudine oculorum, sic tu internosces si adsueveris.*

[15] These are the exact examples Chrysippus tried to solve in the second section of *De Stoic. repugn.* 23 (1045D–E). It is quite natural that the Stoic scholarch responded to this challenge raised by his antagonists (in my opinion, Arcesilaus and/or his disciples), taking account of similar premises and examples.

of chapter 23 of *Stoic self-contradictions* (1045D–F).[16] It is just for this reason that Chrysippus had to add a new category of indifferent things: those that excite attraction or aversion, but no more in one direction than in the other.[17]

2. *From Aristo's ἐπελεύσεις to the Academic Notion of an "Adventitious Faculty of the Soul"*

Which were Zeno's and Aristo's responses to these awkward questions that Arcesilaus would have raised? With regard to the problem of the liberty of indifference, it was in fact the Stoic Aristo of Chios who exposed himself better to Academy's sharp criticism, especially since Aristo's doctrine of intermediate action was even more radical than Zeno's. After all, the founder of the Stoa might keep thinking that choice between two indistinguishable drachmas is something of little importance and so he had no reason to worry too much about it. But Aristo could not say the same thing. Indeed, he denied that indifferent things may possess different degrees of value and therefore he held that neither natural advantages nor other general criterion serve to guide the sage in his intermediate actions.[18] Aristo acknowledges that, making use of the indifferents, the sage can feel some preference or desire for one thing or for the other, but the specific object of his choice or decision depends on the concrete circumstances of each particular case. Anyway, evaluation of those things to which the sage gives preference in each case is necessarily subordinated to his knowledge of what is the only good (virtue) and what is the only evil (vice).[19]

That is why Aristo quite provocatively said that in fact the sage will prefer whatever occurred to him and whatever came into his mind under

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[16] See S. Bobzien, "Early Stoic Determinism", *RMM* 48 (2005) 489–516 (501–504) and Caballero, "Indiferencia", 30–32.

[17] S.E., *M.* 11.59: Τὸ ⟨ἀδιάφορον δ' οἴονται λέγεσθαι τριχῶς, (…) ⟨καθ' ἕτερον⟩ δὲ πρὸς ὃ ὁρμὴ μὲν καὶ ἀφορμὴ γίγνεται, οὐ μᾶλλον δὲ πρὸς τόδε ἢ τόδε, οἷον ἐπὶ δυοῖν δραχμῶν ἀπαραλλάκτων τῷ τε χαρακτῆρι καὶ τῇ λαμπρότητι, ὅταν δέῃ τὴν ἑτέραν αὐτῶν αἱρεῖσθαι· ὁρμὴ μὲν γὰρ γίγνεται πρὸς τὸ ἕτερον αὐτῶν, οὐ μᾶλλον δὲ πρὸς τόδε ἢ τόδε. See Spinelli, *Etici*, 230–233.

[18] Cic., *De fin.* 4.47: *ut Aristonis esset explosa sententia dicentis nihil differre aliud ab alio, nec esse res ullas praeter virtutes et vitia, inter quas quicquam omnino interesset*; S.E., *M.* 11.65: καθόλου γὰρ τὰ μεταξὺ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας ἀδιάφορα μὴ ἔχειν μηδεμίαν παραλλαγήν, μηδὲ τινὰ μὲν εἶναι φύσει προηγμένα, τινὰ δὲ ἀποπροηγμένα, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὰς διαφόρους τῶν καιρῶν περιστάσεις μήτε τὰ λεγόμενα προῆχθαι πάντως γίνεσθαι προηγμένα, μήτε τὰ λεγόμενα ἀποπροῆχθαι κατ' ἀνάγκην ὑπάρχειν ἀποπροηγμένα.

[19] S.E., *M.* 7.12–13: ἀρκεῖν δὲ πρὸς τὸ μακαρίως βιῶναι τὸν οἰκειοῦντα μὲν πρὸς ἀρετὴν λόγον, ἀπαλλοτριοῦντα δὲ κακίας, κατατρέχοντα δὲ τῶν μεταξὺ τούτων, περὶ ἃ οἱ πολλοὶ πτοηθέντες κακοδαιμονοῦσιν.

unrepeatable circumstances.[20] The moral autonomy of the sage is absolute: rational knowledge of good and evil[21] is a constant feature of his choices and rejections,[22] but the specific conditions where he makes decisions about indifferent things are so infinitely varied, as to make him adapt flexibly to new and changing circumstances.[23] For that reason, sometimes—and not only exceptionally—the wise man will prefer what for Zeno is unpreferable and unnatural (for example, disease instead of health), if this is fitting to his moral perfection.[24] In Aristo's thinking, the infinite variety of stimuli that comes from the outside world and enters into mind was what Cicero called *occurrentia*.[25]

There is a plausible Greek equivalent for this Latin word: the term ἐπελεύσεις, which was strongly criticized by Chrysippus as Plutarch reports in *De Stoic. repugn.* 23.[26] However, who are the philosophers Chrysippus criticizes by showing that ἐπελεύσεις are motions without cause? In a previous study, I have tried to argue that the victim of Chrysippus's criticism was not Aristo of Chios, even though he was the one who introduced the idea of ἐπελεύσεις / *occurrentia*,[27] but Arcesilaus and/or his followers of the

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[20] Cic., *De fin.* 4.43: *Deinde Aristo, qui nihil relinquere non est ausus, introduxit autem, quibus commotus sapiens appeteret aliquid, quodcumque in mentem incideret, et quodcumque tamquam occurreret.*

[21] *SVF* 3.256, p. 60,14–16: νομίσας γοῦν ὁ Ἀρίστων μίαν εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς δύναμιν, ᾗ λογιζόμεθα, καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἔθετο μίαν, ἐπιστήμην ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν.

[22] Sen., *Ep.* 94.12: *exactum iudicium de fugendis petendisque.*

[23] See S.E., *M.* 11.67: ὥσπερ οὖν ἐν ταῖς ὀνοματογραφίαις ἄλλοτ' ἄλλα προτάττομεν στοιχεῖα, πρὸς τὰς διαφόρους περιστάσεις ἀρτιζόμενοι, καὶ τὸ μὲν δέλτα, ὅτε τὸ τοῦ Δίωνος ὄνομα γράφομεν, τὸ δὲ ἰῶτα, ὅτε τὸ τοῦ Ἴωνος, τὸ δὲ ὦ, ὅτε τὸ τοῦ Ὡρίωνος, οὐ τῇ φύσει ἑτέρων παρὰ τὰ ἕτερα γράμματα προκρινομένων, τῶν δὲ καιρῶν τοῦτο ποιεῖν ἀναγκαζόντων, οὕτω κἀν τοῖς μεταξὺ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας πράγμασιν **οὐ φυσική τις γίνεται ἑτέρων παρ' ἕτερα πρόκρισις, κατὰ περίστασιν δὲ μᾶλλον.**

[24] S.E., *M.* 11.66–67: ἐὰν γοῦν δέῃ τοὺς μὲν ὑγιαίνοντας ὑπηρετεῖν τῷ τυράννῳ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀναιρεῖσθαι, τοὺς δὲ νοσοῦντας ἀπολυομένους τῆς ὑπηρεσίας συναπολύεσθαι καὶ τῆς ἀναιρέσεως, ἕλοιτ' ἂν μᾶλλον ὁ σοφὸς τὸ νοσεῖν κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ἢ [ὅτι] τὸ ὑγιαίνειν. καὶ ταύτῃ οὔτε ἡ ὑγεία προηγμένον ἐστὶ πάντως οὔτε ἡ νόσος ἀποπροηγμένον.

[25] Cic., *De fin.* 4.43: *quod ea non occurrentia fingunt, vincunt Aristonem;* (…) *ille enim occurrentia nescio quae comminiscebatur*; Ibid. 4.47: *Hoc igitur quaerentes omnes, et ii, qui quodcumque in mentem veniat aut quodcumque occurrat se sequi dicent, et vos ad naturam revertemini.*

[26] Chrysippus *apud* Plu., *De Stoic. repugn.* 23, 1045C: ἐν δὲ ταῖς πλαττομέναις ὑπ' ἐνίων καὶ λεγομέναις ταύταις ἐπελεύσεσιν αἰτίας ἀδήλους ὑποτρέχειν καὶ λανθάνειν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ θάτερα τὴν ὁρμὴν ἀγούσας.

[27] About Aristo's thinking regarding ἐπελεύσεις, there are divergent interpretations. I follow here that of J. Moreau, "Ariston et le stoïcisme", in idem, *Stoïcisme, épicurisme, tradition hellenique* (Paris 1979) 21–42 (see 41, n. 2) [= "Ariston et le stoïcisme", *REA* (1948) 27–48] and A.M. Ioppolo, *Aristone di Chio e lo stoicismo antico* (Naples 1981) 171–183. Other views in

Academy.[28] In my opinion, these philosophers might have attacked the concept of ἐπελεύσεις defended by Aristo and for dialectical purposes they might have adopted the terminology of their opponent, as it was the usual Academic method in their debates with the Stoics. Moreover, I think, they might have offered a wide account of several cases where the soul, despite the equilibrium of impulses, makes random choices without preference (for example, among indiscernible things); finally, they could have arrived at the conclusion that the commanding part of the soul can sometimes resort to an "adventitious faculty or motion" (ἐπελευστικὴ δύναμις or κίνησις) in order to release the impulses of being coerced by external causes.

According to this hypothesis, the adventitious power of the soul was the dialectical response made by Arcesilaus and/or his disciples to Aristo's theory of intermediate action. Aristo's doctrine of ἐπελεύσεις might have been easily exposed to Academy's sharp criticism. The Academic reasoning could have been built as follows: a) Depending on circumstances Aristo's wise man will prefer whatever occurred to him and whatever came into his mind; b) In some circumstances, then, the wise man might be forced to choose immediately between two indiscernible drachmas, if this decision happens to preserve his moral perfection (and, although this could seem quite strange, an apparently trivial decision such as this could happen to be a decisive choice, since the variety of circumstances to which sage's decision may be applied is limitless); c) Nevertheless, in this particular case the wise man will not be able to escape inaction: since he must always have a well-founded reason to choose one coin or another depending on the circumstances, but experts on the subject do not even agree on which would be the good coin and which would be the bad one, the only thing that he could do would be to delay assent and decision indefinitely, so that he is finally condemned to inaction.

In the model advocated by Aristo, the impotence of the wise man is inexorable. By contrast, his Academic opponents might have stressed the trivial and easily verifiable fact that everybody can choose at random between equipollent alternatives. This means that impulses are supposed to be free

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D.N. Sedley, "The Stoic-Platonist Debate on *kathêkonta*", in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Topics in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford 1999) 128–152 at 130–133 and Boys-Stones, *Aristo's Psychology*, 83–94.

[28] The successor of Arcesilaus at the headship of the Academy, Lacydes of Cyrene, was also involved in anti-Stoic arguments regarding indiscernible things and inaction, as is suggested by the biographical anecdote reported by D.L. 4.59 and Numenius *apud* Eus., *PE* 14.7.1–6. See R.J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics. The Arguments of the Philosophers* (New York 1995) 84–86.

from external causes, that is to say: the motion of the soul is somewhat independent of the fact that presentations, which *occur* to us under specific circumstances (Aristo's ἐπελεύσεις), are cognitive impressions (suffice it to say they look clear and distinct);[29] and, if this is so, impulses are also autonomous from the assent that the Stoics give to cognitive presentations in order to achieve action.[30]

When the presentations are indiscernible and one has to choose between them, one can make the choice because it arises from an inner motion that can operate randomly and dissolve the initial perplexity. In fact, according to this reconstruction, the Academics might have claimed that ἐπελεύσεις take place not externally, but internally, that is to say, in the ruling part of the soul (ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ): if this is so, ἐπελεύσεις would be random decisions generated by a faculty (δύναμις) or motion (κίνησις) *that occurs adventitiously* (ἐπελευστική) and makes an inclination (ἐπίκλισις) from itself towards one of two (or several) equivalent options.

In their debates with Aristo, Arcesilaus and/or his disciples might have constructed a model of random decision making, and doing so they could have used the same lexicon as their Stoic opponent. This is just the specific way that the Academics liked to do dialectic battle. But, while borrowing the term ἐπελεύσεις from Aristo's vocabulary, the Middle Academy, as often happened,[31] would have changed remarkably the meaning and function that this concept had for Aristo. Indeed, in Aristo's thinking ἐπελεύσεις are *adventitious stimuli* that reach the wise man's mind from outside and define for him potential objects of choice and preference: that is why he performs intermediate actions whenever needed by circumstances, his goal being always a rational attempt to remain committed to moral perfection. However, in the hands of Academic philosophers, ἐπελεύσεις became *adventitious motions* of the soul that allow the wise person to make random decisions in his everyday life, mainly when he must choose between indiscernible items.

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[29] Cic., *Luc*. 58.1–4: *Neque id est contra vos; nam vobis satis esset ova illa non internoscere; nihilo enim magis adsentirer hoc illud esse quam si inter illa omnino nihil interesset.*

[30] But not as if there was an absolute liberty of indifference, as is the case of medieval scholastic philosophy, which seems to disregard even outside presentations or stimuli for action and was strongly criticized by Leibniz: See G.W. Leibniz, *Escritos en torno a la libertad, el azar y el destino*, selección, estudio preliminar y notas de C. Roldán Panadero, traducción de R. Rodríguez Aramayo y C. Roldán Panadero (Madrid 1990) XIV–XX. This category of absolute indifference was unknown to Ancient Philosophy.

[31] The concept of εὔλογον ("the reasonable") is a good example for this Academic method of reinterpretation of a Stoic term in a new context: See Ioppolo, *Opinione e scienza*, 129–131.

When redefining Aristo's ἐπελεύσεις, the Academics revealed the Achilles' heel of the Stoic theory of knowledge: the presumption that cognitive presentation and successive assent are essential features of action. On the contrary, by suspension of judgement (ἐποχή) Arcesilaus and his followers can disregard assent and make no statement about presentations at all. It must nonetheless be pointed out that ἐποχή doesn't stop the Academics acting. In a world where no one can know anything for sure, because all things are obscure (ἄδηλα), the Academic sage is able to perform actions without ever assenting, since, unlike Pyrrho, he has a practical criterion.[32] According to Plutarch, in fact, Arcesilaus has described the mechanism of action in very simple terms: when the impulsive faculty (τὸ ὁρμητικόν) is affected ("woken" says Plutarch) by presentations, "a kind of motion and process" arises suddenly from inside and leads the soul to "what appears to be appropriate to his nature" (τὸ φαινόμενον οἰκεῖον).[33]

This process takes place in the commanding part of the soul, which somehow generates within itself a spontaneous propensity towards whatever seems to be of natural affinity to it.[34] Instead of an opinion on what is suitable, the Academic wise man feels directly within him a natural attraction towards something that seems appropriate to him, without making any statement on its true nature. This criterion of action does not only provide an automatic impulse towards any object of desire, because it is supplemented by an additional criterion that searches for reasonable means of achieving natural goals. In fact, the soundness of sage's decisions, always motivated by natural trends, can be wholly confirmed *a posteriori*, when the success of actions (κατορθώματα) that the sage performs allows him to provide a reasonable justification for them (εὔλογος ἀπολογία).[35]

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[32] See Ioppolo, *Opinione e scienza*, 140–156; Thorsrud, *Scepticism*, 50–52.

[33] Plu., *Adv. Col.* 26, 1121F–1122F. See Ioppolo, *Opinione e scienza*, 134–140 and recently again: "Su alcune recenti interpretazioni dello scetticismo dell'Academia: Plutarch. *Adv. Col.* 26, 1121F–1122F: una testimonianza su Arcesilao", *Elenchos* 21 (2000) 333–360.

[34] Plu., *Adv. Col.* 26, 1122B–D: τὸ δ' ὁρμητικὸν ἐγειρόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ φανταστικοῦ πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα πρακτικῶς κινεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, οἷον ῥοπῆς ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ καὶ νεύσεως γινομένης. οὐδὲ τοῦτ' οὖν ἀναιροῦσιν οἱ περὶ πάντων ἐπέχοντες, ἀλλὰ χρῶνται τῇ ὁρμῇ φυσικῶς ἀγούσῃ πρὸς τὸ φαινόμενον οἰκεῖον (…) ἡ γὰρ πρᾶξις δυοῖν δεῖται, φαντασίας τοῦ οἰκείου καὶ πρὸς τὸ φανὲν οἰκεῖον ὁρμῆς, ὧν οὐδέτερον τῇ ἐποχῇ μάχεται. δόξης γάρ, οὐχ ὁρμῆς οὐδὲ φαντασίας ὁ λόγος ἀφίστησιν. ὅταν οὖν φανῇ τὸ ἡδὺ οἰκεῖον, οὐθὲν δεῖ πρὸς τὴν ἐπ' αὐτὸ κίνησιν καὶ φορὰν δόξης, ἀλλ' ἦλθεν εὐθὺς ἡ ὁρμή, κίνησις οὖσα καὶ φορὰ τῆς ψυχῆς.

[35] See S.E., *M.* 7.158: φησὶν ὁ Ἀρκεσίλαος, ὅτι **ὁ περὶ πάντων ἐπέχων κανονιεῖ τὰς αἱρέσεις καὶ φυγὰς καὶ κοινῶς τὰς πράξεις τῷ εὐλόγῳ**, κατὰ τοῦτό τε προερχόμενος τὸ κριτήριον κατορθώσει· τὴν μὲν γὰρ εὐδαιμονίαν περιγίνεσθαι διὰ τῆς φρονήσεως, τὴν δὲ φρόνησιν κεῖσθαι ἐν τοῖς κατορθώμασιν, τὸ δὲ κατόρθωμα εἶναι ὅπερ πραχθὲν εὔλογον ἔχει τὴν ἀπολογίαν. ὁ προσέχων οὖν τῷ εὐλόγῳ

In the mechanism of action described by Arcesilaus, the motion of the commanding part of the soul plays the leading role and makes it unnecessary to assent. Presentations are indispensable because they inevitably come to us, but their function is rather passive, in that they just reach the soul and give way to impulsive motions. When stimulated by external causes, natural impulse takes the initiative and directs the course of action, playing the role that the Stoics assigned to assent. The difference lies in that the Academic sage makes no judgement over the nature of presentations that he receives. The motion of the soul discovers and reveals by itself what appears to be connatural or appropriate among the multiplicity of presentations that occur from the outside.[36]

I do not find it unlikely that, as well as this natural motion of impulse, Arcesilaus and/or any of his disciples might have held that an adventitious motion of the soul ought to serve to explain the fact that sometimes people choose between indiscernible presentations at random. As Plutarch reports it, Arcesilaus made impulse and action free from assent, and so it is reasonable that the Academics were concerned in denying any kind of determination involved in the impulsive faculty. There would not have been much sense in doing otherwise. What is more, the criterion of action held by Arcesilaus, when facing states of equilibrium, might admittedly have run the risk of inaction: indeed, even if assent was not needed, two identical drachmas, when offered for the sage's choice, would wake equal impulses that would have neutralized each other. But the fact that the Academic sage does make a random choice shows that an adventitious motion of the soul can choose randomly by itself and so avoid the danger of impasse.

The autonomy of random decisions shows that the model of the wise man adopted by the Middle Academy could achieve actions even in states of equilibrium, where the exercize of the freedom of indifference is just required. Emerging from the controversy with Aristo of Chios, the adventitious faculty of the soul might then have provided a detailed explanation

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κατορθώσει καὶ εὐδαιμονήσει. See the useful comments of Ioppolo, *Opinione e scienza*, 121–134 and Thorsrud, *Scepticism*, 52–56. I think that Arcesilaus's εὔλογον plays an important role not only after making choices, but also before them being made.

[36] Plu., *Adv. Col.* 1122A-B: τὴν δὲ περὶ πάντων ἐποχὴν οὐδ' οἱ πολλὰ πραγματευσάμενοι καὶ κατατείναντες εἰς τοῦτο συγγράμματα καὶ λόγους ἐκίνησαν· ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς Στοᾶς αὐτῇ τελευτῶντες ὥσπερ Γοργόνα τὴν ἀπραξίαν ἐπάγοντες ἀπηγόρευσαν, ὡς πάντα πειρῶσι καὶ στρέφουσιν αὐτοῖς **οὐχ ὑπήκουσεν ἡ ὁρμὴ γενέσθαι συγκατάθεσις** οὐδὲ τῆς ῥοπῆς ἀρχὴν ἐδέξατο τὴν πρόσθεσιν, ἀλλ' **ἐξ ἑαυτῆς ἀγωγὸς ἐπὶ τὰς πράξεις** ἐφάνη, μὴ δεομένη τοῦ προστίθεσθαι.

of how the Academic sage faced the problem of Buridan's ass.[37] The point is that this explanation, whether it is derived from Arcesilaus or from some of his disciples, is a suitable complement for the criterion of action described by Arcesilaus himself. In both cases, the sage can make decisions by following impulses born in the ruling part of the soul: in most circumstances, such impulses suddenly lead to what seems natural and pleasant; but in other situations, where the choice has to be made between options that, while natural, are very alike or wholly equipollent, the impulse of the commanding part of the soul happens to be an adventitious motion, which provides an almost instant inclination in a definite direction by itself.[38]

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[37] It must be pointed out that, of course, the Academic account on the adventitious faculty or motion of the soul is not to be considered a positive doctrine on its own: this would be a great contradiction in the case of the sceptical Academy. But this fact does not mean that the philosophers of this school did not explain how the academic sage's life actually is and how the suspension of judgement does not prevent him from involvement in actions: see Ioppolo, *Opinione e sccienza*, 134–146; Ioppolo, "Interpretazioni", 333–360; Hankinson, *Sceptics*, 80–82. In fact, Academics used to give a 'phenomenological' account of the wise man's behavior on the grounds of subjective experience (*in propria persona*) and did not aim to construct any universal doctrine. In this case, then, as in other controversies between Academics and Stoics, the adventitious motion of the soul serves more than a dialectical purpose: firstly, it is useful in order to criticize Aristo's ἐπελεύσεις, which may from outside coerce the Stoic sage to be at an impasse, mainly when he has to make choices without preference; secondly, if the ἐπελεύσεις are to be placed in the commanding part of the soul, as Arcesilaus and/or his disciples might have claimed, this motion gives account of a psychological pattern for random selection among indiscernibles and "provides the impulses with release from the constraint of external causes" (trad. Cherniss, *Moralia*, 509). This is, in short, the main goal of the explanation, as is suggested by the word δοκοῦντες at the head of the chapter 23 of Plutarch's *De Stoic. repugn.*: τοῦ κατηναγκάσθαι **δοκοῦντες** ὑπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν αἰτιῶν ταῖς ὁρμαῖς ἀπόλυσιν πορίζειν ἔνιοι τῶν φιλοσόφων ἐπελευστικήν τινα κίνησιν ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ κατασκευάζουσιν. In Academic context, such a word might be rather surprising, but I think it must be attributed to Plutarch's responsibility, just like in *Adv. Col.* 1122A: τὰ περὶ τῆς ἐποχῆς **δόγματα** καὶ τῆς ἀκαταληψίας.

[38] See Hankinson, *Sceptics*, 82: "Of course there may be cases of total equilibrium—occasionally perhaps the Sceptic will find himself in the position of Buridan's ass. But there is no reason to think that such *impasses* will be permanent, or even persistent. Nature will see to it soon enough that ones inclines one way or the other". My point is that the natural criterion of Arcesilaus is not always enough so as to break the deadlock, for it is just Nature that neutralizes the impulses, and therefore a type of adventitious motion of the soul is required. H. Maconi, "Nova non philosophandi philosophia", *OSAPh* 6 (1988) 231–253 had already held that in these cases a criterion must be mandatory, but it is difficult to see how the Arcesilean criterion of reasonable justification, as he claimed, can serve this function, if what is required in a case of perfect equilibrium is a random decision.

3. *Choice without Preference and the Academic Battle against the Stoic Theory of Fate*

This is my Academic interpretation of Plutarch's passage from *De Stoic. repugn.* 23. As has been seen, this hypothesis contextualizes the description of an adventitious faculty of the soul in Academic and Stoic current debates over indiscernibles and criterion of action. Moreover, if this reconstruction is right, Aristo's ἐπελεύσεις, which provide the lexicon of the controversy, can be integrated with the Academic reception regarding them. Finally, the reconstruction of Middle Academy's thinking about freedom of indifference is also consistent with the main arguments that both Arcesilaus and Carneades employed against the Stoic theory of fate.

Arcesilaus found a great contradiction in the Stoic conception of fate (if he is truly the source of the dialectical reasoning of Cic., *De fat.* 40): if it is an all-powerful and all-embracing chain of causes, as Zeno said, nothing is in our power, because all things submit to antecedent causes: neither impulses, nor assents, nor actions; if so, it would make no sense of praise and blame; now, this does not seem to be an acceptable conclusion; *ergo*, *probably* not all that happens in the world is due to destiny and so the nexus of determinist causation can be broken. In this reasoning, rejection of Stoic fate grounds on the premise that man has moral responsibility for his acts, an assertion that the Stoics doubtlessly shared. For that reason, this argument is dialectical and does not say anything about what the Academics really think about free will.[39]

Carneades is also author of a dialectical argument against Stoic fate, but in this case the premise for his reasoning is provided by the thesis that something is in our power, a statement that Chrysippus shared too:[40] "If all

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[39] See Cic., *De fat.* 40: *Eas enim veteres illi, quibus omnia fato fieri videbantur, vi effici et necessitate dicebant. Qui autem ab iis dissentiebant, fato adsensiones liberabant negabantque fato adsensionibus adhibito necessitatem ab his posse removeri, iique ita disserebant: 'Si omnia fato fiunt, omnia fiunt causa antecedente, et, si adpetitus, illa etiam, quae adpetitum sequuntur, ergo etiam adsensiones; at, si causa adpetitus non est sita in nobis, ne ipse quidem adpetitus est in nostra potestate; quod si ita est, ne illa quidem, quae adpetitu efficiuntur, sunt sita in nobis; non sunt igitur neque adsensiones neque actiones in nostra potestate. Ex quo efficitur, ut nec laudationes iustae sint nec vituperationes nec honores nec supplicia'. **Quod cum vitiosum sit, probabiliter** concludi putant non omnia fato fieri, quaecumque fiant.* See A.M. Ioppolo, "Le cause antecedenti in Cic. *De Fato* 40", in J. Barnes & M. Mignucci (eds), *Matter and Metaphysics* (Naples 1988) 397–424; S. Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford 1998) 245–250; Chiesara, *Escepticismo griego*, 57–58.

[40] See A.M. Ioppolo, "La critica di Carneade al concetto stoico di causa in Cic. *De fato* 31–37", *Lexis* 25 (2007) 103–119.

events are the results of antecedent causes, they are all bound and fastened together by a natural chain. But if this is so, all things are brought about by necessity; if that is the case, nothing is in our power. *Now, something is in our power*; but if everything happens as a result of destiny, all things happen as a result of antecedent causes; therefore, whatever happens does not happen as a result of destiny".[41]

However, besides providing dialectical arguments, Carneades stressed the causal autonomy of the voluntary motions of the soul, as Cicero's *De Fato* explicitly reports.[42] When Carneades is criticizing the Epicurean *clinamen*, he shows that Epicurus could have rightly argued against Stoic fate by simply defending the Epicurean doctrine that there are certain kinds of voluntary motions in the mind. While taking Epicurus's place, it is Carneades who is speaking here *in propria persona*, because he is not employing a Stoic premise, but an Epicurean view that Carneades can defend against Chrysippus from his own point of view.

So, the Academic Carneades argued against his Stoic opponents that voluntary motions of the soul do not have antecedent causes in the chain of destiny, but it is nature of human free will which brings them about. In these cases, to speak of uncaused motions would be an improper way of saying that such impulses are inherent to the soul and are not due to antecedent and external causes. In this passage, Carneades is arguing strongly for the intrinsic causality of human freedom and he is replying in advance to "all those physicists" who would have burst out laughing, if he had proposed a motion without cause, just like Epicurus did when speaking of an atomic swerve. For this reason he does not hesitate to draw a peculiar parallel between the weight of atoms and free will: just as atoms, according to Epicurus, fall downward through an empty void by their own weight and there is no external cause that can explain this motion, so the voluntary motions of the soul are equally caused by its own nature, which allows them to be in our power and to obey us.[43]

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[41] Cic., *De fat.* 31: *Carneades genus hoc totum non probabat et nimis inconsiderate concludi hanc rationem putabat. Itaque premebat alio modo nec ullam adhibebat calumniam; cuius erat haec conclusio: 'Si omnia antecedentibus causis fiunt, omnia naturali conligatione conserte contexteque fiunt; quod si ita est, omnia necessitas efficit; id si verum est, nihil est in nostra potestate*; ***est autem aliquid in nostra potestate***; *at, si omnia fato fiunt, omnia causis antecedentibus fiunt; non igitur fato fiunt, quaecumque fiunt*'. The translation is by A.A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy* (Berkeley–Los Angeles ^{2}1986) 103–104.

[42] See Cic., *De fat.* 23–25.

[43] Cic., *De fat.* 25: *Rursus autem, ne omnes physici inrideant nos, si dicamus quicquam fieri sine causa, distinguendum est et ita dicendum, ipsius individui hanc esse naturam, ut pondere et*

It seems that for Carneades free will is an immediate fact of subjective experience, which there is no need to argue for. Now, this claim that free will is not bound together by external causes echoes Plutarch's description of the adventitious faculty of the soul. This sudden and random motion is said "to free the impulses from being coerced by external causes", that is to say, by presentations coming to us from the outside. In this particular context, the adventitious motion of the soul allows us to break the deadlock, when the external causes of choice are two objects that look identical to each other. Thus, there is a common feature between these "external causes" that Plutarch refers to and those mentioned by Carneades in Cicero's *De fato*, namely the fact that none of these is a determining factor of the soul's motions: just as the adventitious motion of the soul prevents us from being necessitated by external causes, so the voluntary motions of the soul never submit to external causes.

This dichotomy between external causes and free will leads us directly to the current debates between Stoics and Academics on fate. Both schools raised the problem of what place presentation and assent occupy in the causal chain of fate.[44] On this point, both Cicero as Plutarch report that, according to Chrysippus, presentations are always the external causes of assent. In fact, his doctrine of causes explicitly held that presentation is cause of assent, with the proviso that it is only an auxiliary and proximate cause, not a perfect or self-sufficient cause.[45] In fact, all presentations come to the soul from the outside world, as the Stoic Zeno said,[46] and presentation is unavoidable as a proximate cause of assent, as claimed by Chrysippus:[47] in these conditions any assent is supposed to be bound up with the chain of destiny, but not to the extent of becoming a wholly necessitated motion of the soul. Indeed, in order to understand any action, two causal items should be taken into account: firstly, the presentations coming to us from

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gravitate moveatur, eamque ipsam esse causam, cur ita feratur. Similiter ad animorum motus voluntarios non est requirenda externa causa; motus enim voluntarius eam naturam in se ipse continet, ut sit ***in nostra potestate nobisque pareat****, nec id sine causa; eius rei enim* ***causa ipsa natura*** *est*.

[44] Cic., *De fat*. 40: *Atque hoc, si placet, quale sit videamus in adsensionibus, quas prima oratione tractavi. Eas enim veteres illi, quibus omnia fato fieri videbantur, vi effici et necessitate dicebant. Qui autem ab iis dissentiebant, fato adsensiones liberabant negabantque fato adsensionibus adhibito necessitatem ab his posse removeri.*

[45] See Cic., *De fat*. 41–43; Plu., *De Stoic. repugn*. 1055F–1056A. See A.M. Ioppolo, "Il concetto di causa nella filosofia ellenistica e romana", *ANRW* II.36.7 (Berlin–New York 1994) 4491–4545.

[46] Cic., *Acad. post*. 1.40 = *SVF* 1.55.

[47] Alex. Aphr., *Fat*. 13, p. 181 Bruns = *SVF* 2.979.

the outside; and then, the moral character of the person who receives them and engages in actions. This is an important point, because different people will react in different ways to the same presentations.[48]

A cone and a cylinder can receive the same force from outside, but such a force does not completely determine the movement that will follow in each case: whereas the cylinder begins to roll, the cone will turn over.[49] Likewise, according to the Stoics, human being was born with an innate capacity for good, but only under the corrupting influence (διαστροφή) of society, they have been losing their natural goodness.[50] Nevertheless, the capacity to restore their souls back to health by means of philosophy is always in their hands. Those who make progress towards virtue, as well as the Stoic sage, who possesses it already, will be able to cushion the strength of presentations coming to their soul, to withstand the assaults of external causes and to withhold assent in the face of all that is not appropriate to his rationality. On the contrary, in similar conditions most people will let themselves be carried away by the pressure of external causes and will be governed by false opinions and the passions that they produce in the soul.[51] It is evident that for many people presentations, while being auxiliary causes of assent, have more strength than their own nature, which is unable to offer resistance.

Carneades was openly hostile to Chrysippus's conception of fate and denied that presentations were external and antecedent causes of the voluntary motions of the soul. While nature makes some people more inclined to one thing and others to something else, the fact of walking or sitting at a certain moment is not a result of external and antecedent causes,[52] which exist from eternity in the nature of things, but only a result of accidental or contingent causes (*fortuitae causae*), which are due to human free will.[53] If

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[48] Origen, *Princ.*, 3, p. 108 Delarue = *SVF* 2.988.

[49] Cic., *De fat.* 41.

[50] On the issue see above this volume, chapter 2, 43–54.

[51] Gell., *Noct. Att.* 7.2 = *SVF* 2.1000.

[52] Cic., *De fat.* 9: ***Non*** *enim, si alii ad alia propensiores sunt propter causas naturalis et antecedentis, idcirco* ***etiam nostrarum voluntatum atque adpetitionum sunt causae naturales et antecedentes****. Nam nihil esset in nostra potestate, si ita se res haberet* (…) *Ut enim et ingeniosi et tardi ita nascantur antecedentibus causis itemque valentes et inbecilli, non sequitur tamen, ut etiam sedere eos et ambulare et rem agere aliquam principalibus causis definitum et constitutum sit; Ibid. 10: Sed haec ex naturalibus causis vitia nasci possunt, extirpari autem et funditus tolli, ut is ipse, qui ad ea propensus fuerit, a tantis vitiis avocetur, non est id positum in naturalibus causis,* ***sed in voluntate, studio, disciplina****.*

[53] Cic., *De fat.* 19: *At qui introducunt causarum seriem sempiternam, ii* ***mentem hominis voluntate libera spoliatam*** *necessitate fati devinciunt*; Ibid. 28: *Nec, si omne enuntiatum aut verum aut falsum est, sequitur ilico esse causas inmutabilis, easque aeternas, quae prohibeant*

experience teaches us that voluntary motions are in our power, the reason is to be found in the nature of will, not in antecedent and external causes.[54]

Some libertarian antagonists of Chrysippus criticized him by saying that auxiliary and proximate causes are only preliminary conditions of assent: since they are not able to produce an effect by themselves, they do not deserve to be called causes at all. Therefore, assent is not subordinate to fate. Now, Chrysippus himself acknowledges that assent is always within our power and that presentations are only adjacent and proximate causes, not necessitating causes of assent. So, since Chrysippus cannot deny the fact that there are some things that do not happen as a result of antecedent and necessitating causes in the world, he in fact comes to the same conclusion as his libertarian antagonists did.[55]

This conclusion also agrees with Carneades's claim that voluntary motions have their cause in themselves, and is consistent with his own account on criteria of action. According to this, the Academic sage will give free approval (he can say "yes" or "no")—not assent, which involves a statement over what is "true or false"—to those presentations that appear to be persuasive (πιθανά).[56] In short, for Carneades the sage's free will is autonomous from external and antecedent causes and does not submit to the causal nexus of destiny.[57]

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quicquam secus cadere, atque casurum sit; ***fortuitae*** *sunt causae, quae efficiant, ut vere dicantur, quae ita dicentur: 'Veniet in senatum Cato'*, ***non inclusae in rerum natura atque mundo***; *et tamen tam est inmutabile venturum, cum est verum, quam venisse, nec ob eam causam fatum aut necessitas extimescenda est*. As is well known, Carneades accepted the principle of bivalence by Diodorus Chronus but denied the link between logical truth and causal determinism: see Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom*, 67–70; T. O'Kefee, *Epicurus on Freedom* (Cambridge 2005) 141–143; Chiesara, *Escepticismo*, 76–77.

[54] Cic., *De fat*. 23–25.

[55] Cic., *De fat*. 44: *Haec cum ita sint a Chrysippo explicata, si illi, qui negant adsensiones fato fieri, †fateantur tamen eas* ***non sine viso antecedente*** *fieri, alia ratio est; sed, si concedunt anteire visa, nec tamen fato fieri adsensiones, quod proxima illa et continens causa non moveat adsensionem, vide, ne idem dicant. Neque enim Chrysippus, concedens adsensionis proximam et continentem causam esse in viso positam,* [*neque*] *eam causam esse ad adsentiendum necessariam concedet, ut, si omnia fato fiant, omnia causis fiant antecedentibus et necessariis*; Clem.Al., *Strom*. 8.9 = *SVF* 2.348: ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ.

[56] Cic., *Luc*. 104: *quae cum exposuisset, adiungit dupliciter dici adsensus sustinere sapientem, uno modo cum hoc intellegatur, omnino eum rei nulli adsentiri, altero cum se a respondendo ut aut adprobet quid aut inprobet sustineat, ut neque neget aliquid neque aiat. id cum ita sit, alterum placere ut numquam adsentiatur, alterum tenere ut sequens probabilitatem, ubicumque haec aut occurrat aut deficiat,* ***aut "etiam" aut "non" respondere possit***. See Chiesara, *Escepticismo*, 65–71.

[57] See O'Kefee, *Epicurus*, 153–162.

The above passages clearly show that, in his dialectical arguments against the Stoics, the academic Carneades, just as Arcesilaus did before him, made an effort to free the voluntary motions of the soul from external causes. Far from being the same view, of course, one is given the impression that there is some continuity of thought between the voluntary motions of the soul, argued by Carneades against Chrysippus, and the adventitious faculty of the soul, which I think Arcesilaus could have previously argued against Aristo of Chios. Without doubt, the adventitious faculty involves a much more random motion than free volitions of the soul, but in both cases the soul is itself a free cause of its own motions and has the power to follow its own path in spite of external causes.

PLUTARCH AND "PAGAN MONOTHEISM"

Frederick E. Brenk

> When the Georgian poet, Rustaveli, visited Jerusalem in 1192, he recorded seeing on the frescoes of the Monastery of the Holy Cross, alongside Christian saints, portraits of the Greek sages "such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cheilon, Thucydides, and Plutarch, just as they are to be found in our monastery on Athos".[1]

One of the great religious and philosophical aspects of late antiquity was monotheism.[2] In the second century the only really well-known monotheistic religious groups were the Jews and Christians. Jews and Judaism were

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[1] S. Brock, "A Syriac Collection of Prophecies of the Pagan Philosophers", in S. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity. History, Literature and Theology* (Hampshire 1992) ch. VII (originally *OLP* 14 [1983] 203–246 at 203).

[2] See G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth. Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993); P. Athanassiadi & M. Frede (eds), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1999) and the review by M. Edwards, *JThS* 51 (2000) 339–342; R. Bloch, "Monotheism", in *Brill's New Pauly*, IX (2006) cols 171–174; C. Ando "Introduction to Part IV", in idem (ed.), *Roman Religion* (Edinburgh 2003) 141–146; L.W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord. Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia 2003); J. Assmann, "Monotheism and Polytheism", in S. Iles Johnston (ed.), *Religions of the Ancient World* (Cambridge 2004) 17–31; M. Edwards, "Pagan and Christian Monotheism in the Age of Constantine", in S. Swain & M. Edwards (eds), *Approaching Late Antiquity. The Transformation from Early to Late Empire* (Oxford 2004) 211–234; M. Amerise, "Monotheism and the Monarchy: The Christian Emperor and the Cult of the Sun in Eusebius of Caesarea", *JbAC* 50 (2007) 72–84; P. Athanassiadi, *The Gods Are Gods. Polytheistic Cult and Monotheistic Theology in the World of Late Antiquity* (Ascona, forthcoming); C. Freeman, *A New History of Early Christianity* (New Haven–London 2009); S. Mitchell & P. van Nuffelen (eds), *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge 2010); S. Mitchell & P. van Nuffelen (eds), *Pagan Monotheism between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity* (Leuven 2010); C. Guittard (ed.), *Le monothéisme. Diversité, exclusivisme ou dialogue?* (Paris 2010); F.E. Brenk, "Mixed Monotheism? The Areopagos Speech of Paul", ibid. 131–152 (= F.E. Brenk, *With Unperfumed Voice. Studies in Plutarch, in Greek Literature, Religion and Philosophy, and in the New Testament Background* [Stuttgart 2007] 470–494); P. Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique. La montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris 2010) at 36–37 in her chapter, "Antiquité tardive: de l'homme à Dieu ou la mutation d'une culture", 21–41.

discredited by many because of the Jewish revolts, and many of their communities were in disarray or had been destroyed, including some of the most ancient ones. Christians were still a relatively small group, with their origin in Judaism probably seen as a disadvantage by many Graeco-Romans, and at times persecuted by the authorities. By the sixth century, however, mainly because of Christianity, monotheism had spread to most of the Roman Empire. A few centuries later, the Islamic conquests extended monotheism even beyond the borders of the Roman Empire.

Monotheism, though, was not relegated to religion. Already in early Platonism, but particularly after the advent of Middle-Platonism, the nature of God, His or its relationship to the Platonic Good, to Being, or to the One, whether Plato's God was literally the creator of the universe, and whether there was an aloof First God and a Second God involved with the world was a matter of great discussion. For centuries Stoicism, which was popular in Rome, had been promoting its own form of a kind of spiritual/material monotheism.[3] In traditional scholarship the formulation runs: the divine, God, the *Logos* or Intelligence of the universe, is intrinsic to the universe, with a light material body, and this God is contrasted with matter. In reality, the Stoic God is always composed of both mind and body (the *pneuma*), but one can intellectually abstract it into intellect (*Logos*) and matter (the *pneuma* [a hot gas]). However, recently this formulation has been challenged.[4] In the new view both matter and God are bodies, but they form an indivisible pair. God uses the *pneuma* to shape and maintain the universe in existence. Zeno's innovations to previous philosophy would be the corporeality of God, His not creating the world from intellectual models (*paradeigmata*), and his creation from within matter, not from without, like the Platonic Demiurge (creator god).[5]

In his recent book, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity*, J.M. Schott studies the influence of philosophers on the

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[3] See R. Salles, "Introduction: God and Cosmos in Stoicism", in idem (ed.), *God and Cosmos in Stoicism* (Oxford–New York 2009) 1–19 at 6–7, 19 and J.B. Gourinat, "The Stoics on Matter and Prime Matter: 'Corporealism' and the Imprint of Plato's *Timaeus*", ibid., 46–71.

[4] K. Algra, "Stoic Philosophical Theology and Graeco-Roman Religion", in Salles, *God and Cosmos in Stoicism*, 224–252. See also Salles, "Introduction", ibid., 6–7.

[5] See M. Frede, "Monotheism and Pagan Philosophy", in Athanassiadi & Frede, *Pagan Monotheism*, 41–68, (53); Salles, "Introduction", in Salles, *God and Cosmos*, 6; Gourinat, "The Stoics on Matter", 59–62; also M.J. White, "Stoic Natural Philosophy (Physics and Cosmology)", in B. Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge 2003) 124–152, and in the same volume, K. Algra, "Stoic Theology", 153–178.

Christian Apologists.[6] Long before the Christian Apologists, however, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Aristobulus had argued that there was no contradiction between the true philosophy (the Jewish faith as presented in the Pentateuch) and Greek philosophy.[7] Schott notes that earlier Stoics, for example, Posidonius (ca. 135 to 51 BC), Plutarch, and Numenius of Apamea in Syria (latter half of the second century CE) had broad ethnographic interests. All of them used their ethnographic knowledge to buttress their theories. For instance, believing that human actions were unexplainable by reference to their natural environment alone, they spread their net widely. Among the Platonists of the first three centuries, Schott picks out Plutarch as best exemplifying this interest in cross-cultural research, especially in foreign religions and philosophy.[8] The text he picks out for special regard is *On Isis and Osiris*, to which he dedicates two pages. After Plutarch in this interest, he chooses Numenius, who had read and commented on Plutarch. Numenius was a contemporary of the Christian Apologists Justin Martyr and Tatian in the second half of the second century. Moreover, he was known to both of the later Church Fathers Clement of Alexandria and Origen. As for Plutarch, though he was a committed Platonist for his basic philosophical stand, he felt it necessary to go back to Pythagoras and the traditions of non-Greek peoples. The second century polemicist against the Christians, Celsus, was in agreement with Plutarch and Numenius that true philosophy transcended ethnic boundaries.[9] Unlike the Christians, though, he maintained, like other philosophers, that since all gods are subordinate to the highest God, worship of them is pleasing to God (Origen, *Cels*. 8.2).[10]

Like Plutarch, whom he undoubtedly was influenced by, Numenius' practice, according to Schott, was to range foreign sources as unusual at the time as the Hebrew Bible, citing it for the incorporeality of God, and taking formulations from the *Septuagint* to describe his own "First God". In one sense, this practice tended to eliminate the distinction between Greek

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[6] J.M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia 2008).

[7] See L. Arcari, "I *monoteismi* tra storia, comparazione e tipologia", *HRel* 3 (2011) 1–22, citing the fragments as found in Eus., *PE* 8.1.451–454 and 8.2.190–197. However, A. Wasserstein and D. Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint. From Classical Antiquity to Today* (Cambridge 2006) 27–35, esp. 30, question whether Aristobulus even existed.

[8] Schott, *Christianity*, 20–21.

[9] Schott, *Christianity*, 45–46.

[10] Schott, *Christianity*, 48. See also Freeman, *A New History of Early Christianity*, 171–195, on "Celsus, the Challenge of Greek Philosophy" and "Origen and Early Christian Scholarship"; Frede, "Monotheism and Pagan Philosophy", 55; Algra, "Stoic Philosophical Theory", 242–243; A. Fürst, "Monotheism between Cult and Politics", in Salles, *One God*, 82–99 at 88–97.

and "barbarian", but at the same time with an opposite effect. For example, Plutarch does not erase distinctions between cultures, but rather brings them into stark relief, while stressing the superiority of Greek culture.[11] Likewise, Porphyry (234 to ca. 305) never ceases to assert the superiority of Greek wisdom, even though he, too, was considered appreciative of foreign cultures (*philobarbaros*).[12]

Ancient Greek intellectuals inevitably used a Greek "lens" or "spectacles" to explain foreign culture. If we continue with Schott's analysis, in *On Isis and Osiris* (352A), for instance, Plutarch interprets the *hieros logos* or "sacred truth" of the Egyptians, as the possession of those who live a philosophical life, which has as its end "the knowledge of the First, the Lord, and the Intelligible (*noetos*)". For Schott this type of comparison and cross-cultural research is not neutral. It examines "barbarian wisdom" as something different from Greek thought and finds the differences worthy of censure. As an example he cites Plutarch's condemnation of animal worship, which "incites the simple and weak toward pure superstition and turns more intelligent persons against religion" (379E).[13] This is true, but as typical of Plutarch, he also treats animal worship with some sympathy. Elsewhere in the essay Plutarch regards animal worship as not worse than Greek attitudes toward images, and in some respects even better (382A–C), since animals, as living beings, are closer to an image of the gods than statues.[14]

Christians imitated this cross-cultural referencing, according to Schott, turning the tables on Greek philosophy. They argued that Greek culture and philosophy applied to just one people, but Christianity transcended any one ethnic group. Christianity was not just superior, but the only true philosophy. They acknowledged their debt to Plato, but argued that only Christianity possessed the whole truth or *logos*. Schott cites Rebecca Lyman for noting how the Christian Apologists displaced the sole cultural authority of Greek philosophy. One might doubt whether Greek philosophy was

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[11] See also D.S. Richter, "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: Text, Cult, and Cultural Appreciation", *TAPhA* 131 (2001) 191–216, and *Cosmopolis. Imagining Community in Late Classical Athens and the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford 2011) 212–213; and F.E. Brenk, "Isis is a Greek Word. Plutarch's Allegorization of Egyptian Religion", in A. Pérez Jiménez et al. (eds), *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles* (Madrid 2009) 227–238, reprint in Brenk, *With Unperfumed Voice*, 334–345.

[12] Schott, *Christianity*, 59–61.

[13] Schott, *Christianity*, 22–28.

[14] For Philo's condemnation, see S.J.K. Pearce, *The Land of the Body. Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt* (Tübingen 2007), esp. 238–253, and the review by F.E. Brenk in *JEA* 94 (2008) 340–342.

"the sole cultural authority". However, one can accept her argument that for Christian truth to be credible it was not sufficient to rely on Biblical authority and revelation alone. Christian writers needed to demonstrate that their philosophy shared the concepts of transcendence and mediation found in Greek philosophy.[15] One might note here that concepts of transcendence and mediation apply primarily to Platonism, but it is true that Platonism was the dominant philosophy of the time.

Later Porphyry, like the Christians, also argued that Plato's philosophy did not possess the whole truth and that it was necessary to consider the philosophy of other peoples as well. Lyman also notes that in employing as a presupposition the superiority of Greek philosophy against the Christians, Porphyry sharpened the Christian response.[16] According to Schott, the debate was not really over monotheism or polytheism. Christians were much closer to the philosophers than they were willing to admit.

He believes the recent interest in pagan monotheism is an indication of how the philosophical *koine* was shared by both sides, pagan and Christian.[17] How many people read Plutarch in Late Antiquity is difficult to determine. One can say the same for the influence of his type of monotheism on later thought. However, he was familiar to people like Proclus and others. In his section on Plutarch's *Nachleben*, K. Ziegler, following R. Hirzel, maintains that Plutarch was read extensively in Late Antiquity and notes that the *Moralia* were read even in Syriac versions.[18]

Let us now do a little imitation of Plutarchean cross-cultural referencing. Flash back to the second half of the second millennium, or more precisely to 1353 BC – 1336 BC or 1351–1334 BC, depending on your preferences in Egyptian

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[15] J.R. Lyman, "2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy", *JECS* 11 (2003) 209–222 at 217, cited by Schott, *Christianity*, 29.

[16] Schott, *Christianity*, 55–61. See also A.P. Johnson, "Arbiter of the Oracular: Reading Religion in Porphyry of Tyre", in A. Cain & N. Lenski (eds), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Farnham–Surrey–Burlington 2009) 103–118. According to Johnson, Porphyry's well-meant esoteric readings created suspicion among Christians, leading both to the disappearance of these books of Porphyry and to the disappearance of the oracular sites altogether.

[17] For the influence of the schools in this period, see Schott, *Christianity*, 15. Schott (197, note 1) cites E.J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley 2006) for Christian and "Platonic schools". See also Mitchell & Van Nuffelen, *One God*, for this interaction and influence, esp. Fürst, "Monotheism between Cult and Politics".

[18] K. Ziegler, "Plutarchos von Chaironeia", *RE* XXI.1 (1951) cols. 636–962, reprinted as *Plutarchos von Chaironeia* (Stuttgart ^{2}1964) (cols. 310–313), relying on R. Hirzel, *Plutarch* (Leipzig 1912). See also S.P. Brock, "From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning", in N. Garsoïan (ed.), *East of Byzantium. Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington 1982) 17–34 at 27, reprint in S. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London 1984) ch. V. See also below in this volume, chapter 5, 85–100, esp. 98–100.

chronology.[19] Here we find, under Akhenaten, what Hornung calls the first attested monotheistic religion. Akhenaten abandoned traditional Egyptian polytheism and his own and his family's personal god, Amon. Instead he introduced worship centered on the sun-god Aten, represented as a solar disk with thin arms and hands projecting from the disk. An early inscription likens Aten to the sun as compared to the stars, but later official language avoids even calling Aten a god, giving him a status above mere gods. Hornung sees this as real monotheistic religion. Akhenaten's new religion did not last long beyond his life, though, and afterwards was completely effaced.[20] However, worship of Ra, the sun-god had been popular long before and already had been quite important in the Fifth Dynasty (approximately 2494 to 2345 BC). Even though the cult of Aten had become extinct, parts of the *Hymn to Aten* were incorporated into hymns to Amon, collected in an anthology known today as *The Hymn to Amon from Bulac*. Moreover, a gradual solarization of Egyptian religion, in which a number of gods were assimilated to the sun, took place in the centuries after Akhenaten's death.

Let us now flash forward to about 1400 years later, to Plutarch's treatment of Osiris in his essay *On Isis and Osiris*, apparently one of his last. In the essay he offers a number of interpretations both Egyptian and Greek to explain Egyptian myth and ritual, though it is difficult to determine which explanations are original with him. Working gradually through a number of interpretations, he arrives at the most sublime, his Platonic interpretation of the Isis and Osiris myth. Osiris in the universe is the intelligence and reason (*nous* and *logos*) of the universe, and all that is ordered, stable, and healthy is his outpouring (ἀπορροή) and reflected image (εἰκὼν ἐμφαινομένη) (371B). Plutarch then establishes Osiris' relation to the sun in Egyptian ritual by offering a number of examples (371F–372E). The sun is regarded by them "as the physical incorporation of the power of the good (Good?), as the perceptible form of intelligible being (Being?)" (372A), though some without reservation assert that Osiris is the sun (372C).[21] He now moves to his Platonic allegory. "Isis has an innate love and yearning for the first and most dominant (κυριώτατον) of all things, which is identical with the good

[19] According to J. Von Beckerath, *Chronologie des pharaonischen Ägypten* (Mainz 1997) 190.

[20] See E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt. The One and the Many* (London 1983) at 185–186 and *Akhenaton and the Religion of Light* (Ithaca 1999) 185–196; and J. Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge 1997).

[21] For Osiris and the sun, see J.G. Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Cardiff 1970) 37, 497–498 (*On Isis* 372B); for Osiris as belonging both to heaven and Hades, 63 (375D), 517; whose reign is in heaven 517, 563, 564. At a very early stage he had taken over attributes and

(Good?) (τὸ ἀγαθόν). It is for this she yearns …" (372E–F). Osiris impregnates Isis (the female principle and receptacle). For creation (γένεσις) is the image (εἰκών) of being (Being?) (οὐσία) in matter, and what is created (τὸ γιγνόμενον) is an image (μίμημα) of [real] being (Being?) (τὸ ὄν) (371F), a statement similar to that at 352A. Osiris is also Being, the Intelligible, and the Good (τὸ ὂν γὰρ καὶ νοητὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν) (373A). One should not believe that Osiris is the sun (376F). Rather all that is good in creation is the work of Isis and is the image (εἰκών) and imitation (μίμεσις) and intelligible quality (λόγος) of Osiris (377A). Isis is in love with "the good and beautiful things about him" (374F–375A).

Plutarch continues by explaining why different peoples worship different gods. First of all one should not worship anything material, or call it divine, such as winds, streams, wine, flames, and so forth (377D). Nor are there different gods among different peoples. They are all the same but under different names (377F–378A). People give different names to the one intelligible principle (λόγος) and the one providence (προνοία), as well as to the subordinate powers (ὑπουργαί) which are assigned to everything.[22] The importance of this passage is that while working on a religious level Plutarch reduces the divine to one God, identified with the Good and Being, and demotes the traditional gods to subordinate powers. The traditional gods, then, are only servants of a God of a completely different nature, much as the angels (or evil spirits) are understood within traditional Judaism and Christianity.

It would be impossible to track down all the places where Plutarch's monotheism might have influenced Late Antiquity and, in particular, Christians. However, one can reconstruct somewhat what might have impressed them. One of Plutarch's most quoted essays in philosophy was his *On the Generation of the World Soul in the Timaeus*. This commentary relied in part on a commentary on the *Timaeus* by Eudorus of Alexandria of the first century BC, whom many scholars consider to be the founder of Middle-Platonism. Unfortunately only a few fragments of his work survive, but they make it possible to reconstruct his theology. Eudorus posited a First God

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functions of Re (Ra), such as the phoenix. See also R. Feldmeier, "Osiris: Der Gott der Toten als Gott des Lebens", in R. Hirsch-Luipold (ed.), *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch. Götterbilder, Gottesbilder, Weltbilder* (Berlin 2005) 215–228.

[22] The concept resembles that in Philo of Alexandria. See C. Termini, *Le potenze di Dio. Studio su* δύναμις *in Philone di Alessandria* (Rome 2000). Recently H.S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods. Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* (Leiden–Boston 2011) esp. 267–268 and "One God: Three Greek Experiments in Oneness", 239–308, esp. 304–307, has shown how Greeks could believe in both one supreme God and many gods, that is simultaneously be both monotheists and polytheists, without sensing a contradiction.

and a Second God, as did Numenius and other Middle-Platonists later.[23] It is important that nowhere in his writings does Plutarch propose this conception.[24] His commentary was considered original for positing a pre-cosmic World Soul. Plato had spoken of the World Soul, but Plutarch's position was different. He accepted the Platonic division in the *Timaeus* of the human person as consisting of intelligence or reason (*nous*), soul (*psyche*), and body. Thus, before time began, since there were no orderly movements of the stars, the world (*kosmos*) possessed only a pre-cosmic, disorderly soul, without a mind. When, however, it received mind (*nous*), it began to be an orderly universe. This literal, chronological reading of the *Timaeus* by necessity required creation in time, a position which he declared was the minority one in the Platonism of his time. He also took Plato's "Craftsman" (*Demiourgos*), who sometimes is called (the) god (or God), literally. Thus, Plato's "craftsman" would be the creator "God", in modern terms, the creator of the universe and all in it. Naturally this position would fit well with the Biblical conception of a creator God who created the world in time.[25]

D. Sedley has argued that in fact a type of two principle cosmology had developed in the Academy under the leadership of Polemon, 314/313–270/269, who was the last scholarch of the Old Academy.[26] Until Sedley's article, which has been much debated, scholars relied almost exclusively on Cicero's report of Antiochus of Ascalon's testimony, which they believed had been tainted by Stoicism (*Acad. post.* 1.24–29). However, Sedley was able to cite a text from Theophrastus, claiming that Plato reduced all to matter, the all-receiving and to another principle, the cause and mover, which he identifies with God and the good (Good?) (fr. 230 FHS&G[5]):

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[23] On Plutarch's god in general, see F. Ferrari, "Der Gott Plutarchs und der Gott Platons", in Hirsch-Luipold, *Gott und die Götter*, 13–26; F.E. Brenk, "Plutarch's Middle-Platonic God: About to Enter (or Remake) the Academy", ibid., 27–50; J. Opsomer, "Demiurges in Early Imperial Platonism", ibid., 51–100; R. Hirsch-Luipold, "Der eine Gott bei Philon von Alexandrien und Plutarch", ibid., 141–168.

[24] Plutarch hints at being aware of this theory at *De Is.* 372E–F, where he claims that Isis has "an innate love for the first and most sovereign of all things, which is identical with the good" (σύμφυτον ἔρωτα τοῦ πρώτου καὶ κυριωτάτου πάντων, ὃ τἀγαθῷ ταὐτόν ἐστι) (Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside*, 372E7–8).

[25] Besides the articles already mentioned, see F. Ferrari & L. Baldi, *Plutarco. La generazione dell'anima nel Timeo* (Naples 2002). On the issue, see also below in this volume, chapter 9, 137–150.

[26] D. Sedley, "The Origins of Stoic God", in D. Frede & A. Laks (eds), *Traditions of Theology. Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath* (Leiden–Boston 2002) 41–84.

> Theophrastus says … "Plato … wants to make the principles two in number; one which underlies, in the role of matter, which he calls 'all-receiving', …, the other in the role of cause and mover, which he connects with the power of god and with that of the good".[27]

Since God and the Good are the same or close to it, we see here a forerunner of Plutarch's theology. Sedley thus argued that Antiochus in the passage from Cicero was not trying to explain Plato, but the true Platonic tradition in the Academy before 260 BC, when the Academy by turning to skepticism was ruined (in Sedley's view). However, recently Sedley's view has been challenged by Frede and Gourinat.[28]

The two principle theory, however, was not exactly Plutarch's position. One of his most quoted essays when it comes to monotheism is *The E at Delphi*. Historians of religion regard the essay as containing the first expression of simultaneous or instantaneous eternity for God. One must be a bit cautious, however, since the main speech is put in the mouth of his teacher, the Platonist, Ammonius, presumably from Alexandria, but whose philosophical activity was in Athens and who left a distinguished Athenian line.[29] Plutarch appears in the dialogue as a brilliant but confused young man—as students often are—who has to be corrected by his teacher. This essay was completed before the *On Isis and Osiris*. Here we see Plutarch (the author, not the *persona* Plutarch in the dialogue), through the *persona* of Ammonius, doing something very akin to Akhenaten. He elevates Plutarch's favorite god not to the supreme position in the pantheon, but completely above the pantheon, in the sense used by some scholars to defend pagan monotheism. Akhenaten went so far as to eliminate all other gods. Nothing like this exists in Plutarch's essay, which even gives a substantial symbolic role to Dionysus, though this is mostly unfavorable (388E–389C). As in almost all Plutarch's dialogues, it is difficult to distinguish his own convictions from those of the speakers.[30] Nothing quite like this type of

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[27] Sedley, "The Origins of Stoic God", 42. Fr. 230 FHS&G5 = W.W. Fortenbaugh, et al., *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence* (Leiden 1992–2005).

[28] Gourinat, "Matter and Prime Matter", 52–53.

[29] See C.P. Jones, "The Teacher of Plutarch", *HSCPh* 71 (1966) 205–213; D.A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London 1973) 5. B. Puech, "Prosopographie des amis de Plutarque", *ANRW* II.33.6 (Berlin–New York 1992) 4831–4893 (4835), takes Ammonius as having received Athenian citizenship.

[30] See F.E. Brenk, "'In Learned Conversation': Plutarch's Symposiac Literature and the Elusive Authorial Voice", in J. Ribeiro Ferreira et al. (eds), *Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch* (Coimbra 2009) 51–61.

monotheism appears in other dialogues, especially in the prominence given to the One. In Plutarch's non-dialogue essays it is relatively easy to determine his position. But even in his *Symposiacs* (*Table Talks*, *Quaestiones Convivalium*), which he composed as dialogues and in which he appears, we cannot be absolutely sure he is speaking all that seriously. The main points of Ammonius' speech (391E–394C) are that God is one (probably also understanding this as "the One" of Plato), alone has real Being, since He alone is eternal (has no beginning and no end), lives in instantaneous (or simultaneous eternity) is also the Good (that is, the Form of the Good in Plato), besides being the creator (in the Greek sense of organizing and holding together the universe):

> He, being one, with one "now" completely filled "forever". He lives in an eternity which is without motion, timeless, and undeviating, without a future or a past.[31]

The best material image with which to represent him is the sun, while the best name for him is Apollo (interpreting it as *a-polus or a-polla* [ἀ-πολύς, ἀ-πολλά]). In his scheme of cosmological dualism, the destructive elements in the world are not caused by him but by another god or *daimon* (a divine spirit which can be either good or bad). Thus, Ammonius admits the presence, at least as a possibility, of other gods of a different order. In the cosmological order, the bad aspects of the sun (in the case of Apollo taken as the sun), represent the action of another god or *daimon*.[32]

A very important aspect of the speech is the exceptional emphasis on the One, something which would have a great future in later Platonism. Emphasis on the One fit into Plutarch's word play: Apollo is *a-polla* (not many). However, the original point of the essay was to explain the letter epsilon at the entrance to the shrine. The letter was sometimes written as epsilon iota, which in Greek means "You are". Ammonius first offers this existentialist explanation, but connects it to the oneness and simplicity of Apollo. He adds to "You are", "You are one". But this is superfluous to a real explanation of the "E" taken by itself. In Platonism the One was

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[31] Plu., *De E* 393A–B.

[32] R. Chlup, "Plutarch's Dualism and the Delphic Cult", *Phronesis* 45 (2000) 138–158, argues that this represents theological dualism in the sublunar sphere. As sublunar and strict dualism, it is hard to accept this as Plutarch's thought. See also R. Feldmeier, "Philosoph und Priester: Plutarch als Theologe", in M. Baumbach et al. (eds), *Mousopolos Stephanos. Festschrift für Herwig Görgemanns* (Heidelberg 1998) 412–425; and J. Opsomer, "Plutarch on the One and the Dyad", in R.W. Sharples & R. Sorabji (eds), *Greek and Roman Philosophy 100 BC – 200 AD* (London 2007) 379–395. For the background see M. Bonazzi, "Eudorus of Alexandria and Early Imperial Platonism", ibid., 365–378.

sometimes regarded as above being. Here, in Middle Platonism we find a transitional stage, since some later Platonists, including Christians, were to arrive at a negative theology, the concept of a God who was beyond being and thus beyond knowing. Plutarch's position would be reassuring to those in antiquity who believed in a God who was not only the One, but also Being, the Good, and the Creator.[33] This God, even as One, though, is not a principle but a person, and thus beyond the criticism of those who would accept as monotheism, only the worship of a personal God.[34] Here "Ammonius" seems to have put himself in the same position as the Stoics, who in many respects have a God who is a principle, but on the other hand acts as the Demiurge in sustaining the world. According to Salles this explains why they did not have an absolute rejection of anthropomorphic images of the gods. Their God had no human shape, but it would be difficult for people to conceptualize Him without one.[35] Unlike the Platonic Demiurge, though, their God was corporeal, did not look to the intellectual models (*paradeigmata*) to create, and worked on matter from within not from without. Salles sees the corporeality and immanence of God as the major contributions of the Stoics. The result was a system which was not strictly monist or materialist, and not strictly dualist.[36]

In Ammonius' speech, there is also the contrast between this world and that of eternity, much as Christians emphasized. On the other hand, neither Christians, nor Plutarch, I believe, would, even as a rhetorical exaggeration, claim that we have no share in being, such as Ammonius claims. Some commentators believe that the translators of the *Septuagint* were influenced by Greek philosophy when they rendered God's words to Moses at the Burning Bush in *Exodus* as "I am who am", much like Ammonius' "Thou art".[37]

In many respects Plutarch did what Akhenaten had tried rather unsuccessfully to do, and with mixed results, raised a personal god to the supreme God of the universe. The god of cult becomes *the* God. In this sense, too, his

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[33] And who would promise a blessed afterlife in eternity.

[34] One of the reasons the Stoics did not entirely reject images of the gods was that they wanted people to see their God as a person. So Salles, "Introduction", 18.

[35] Salles, "Introduction", 18–19.

[36] Salles, "Introduction", 2, 6–7. See also Gourinat, "The Stoics on Matter", 54, 62–64, 68; and J. Cooper, "Chrysippus on Physical Elements", in Salles, *God and Cosmos*, 93–117, esp. 99–105.

[37] *Exodus* 3,14. See J. Whittaker, "Ammonius on the Delphic E", *CQ* 19 (1969) 185–192 (= *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought* [London 1984] ch. V, 189); see also idem, his "Plutarch, Platonism and Christianity", in H.J. Blumenthal & R.A. Markus (eds), *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought. Essays in Honour of A.H. Armstrong* (London 1981) 50–63 (= *Studies in Platonism*, ch. XXVIII, esp. 53–54).

procedure follows that of the Jews who raised a personal god, Yahweh, to an unpronounceable YHWH, or Lord or God. Neither Akhenaten, though, nor the Jews, at least in the beginning, were adapting philosophical concepts and principles well-known in philosophical circles to their God. This was true, later, though, of Philo of Alexandria and of Christians, who also were working in a manner that contrasted their "true concept" of God with the gods of other religions and with the various forms of God in Greek philosophy. Plutarch himself had both in mind, that is, the characteristics of other gods and the definition of God. The definition of God would not be that of other systems, such as the Stoic one.

If Plutarch really believed the One were so important, we would expect it to figure large in his other writings, and especially in his allegorical interpretation of *On Isis and Osiris*. Perhaps making God the One might lead to thinking of Him too much as a principle. Here, though, we find the aspects described above, Being, Good, Beautiful, First, Lord, but not One. In both the cases of Apollo and of Osiris, behind the image of a god of myth and cult, there is a hidden reality, that of God, the supreme entity. In the case of Osiris, the reality hides behind a god who is pitilessly killed. This is not true of Apollo, though, in *The E at Delphi*. Dionysus, the parallel and opposite of Apollo, is also a hidden god of great power, even if not the supreme one (or One). Born of a human mother and divine father, he is torn to pieces and killed, before being resurrected.

It is no wonder that a Byzantine scholar believed that Plutarch must be in heaven, like Plato and Aristotle, as probably did monasteries and monks from Athos to Jerusalem.

SOCRATES AND ALCIBIADES: A NOTORIOUS ΣΚΑΝΔΑΛΟΝ IN THE LATER PLATONIST TRADITION

Geert Roskam

1. *A Remarkable Couple*

The close association between influential statesmen and eminent philosophers has always been a subject of much discussion and speculation, in antiquity no less than nowadays. No doubt more than one philosopher preferred to withdraw into a corner in order to solve his syllogisms,[1] and many probably confined themselves mainly to teaching younger students in their schools. Most politicians, on the other hand, surely ignored the abstract and otherworldly doctrines of the philosophers. And yet, there were many examples of mutual interest and interaction. Public spirited philosophers tried to get in touch with powerful rulers in order to educate them to virtue and thus maximize their own philosophical influence and social usefulness.[2] Enlightened politicians, on the other hand, were willing to listen to what the philosophers had to tell them and to take advantage of their advice to the extent that this was possible and expedient. The great Scipio, for instance, enjoyed the company of Panaetius,[3] just as Pericles appreciated the advice of Anaxagoras,[4] and many more such examples are easy to find.

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[1] See the famous passage in Plato's *Grg*. (485D7), which was often quoted or referred to in later literature; see E.R. Dodds, *Plato. Gorgias. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford 1959) 275 and G. Roskam, *Plutarch's* Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum. *An Interpretation with Commentary* (Leuven 2009) 165.

[2] Plutarch is a clear example. His Platonic position is explained in the brief philosophical διάλεξις *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum*. See Roskam, *Plutarch's Maxime cum principibus* for a detailed interpretation.

[3] The ancient sources that contain information about this friendship can be found in F. Alesse, *Panezio di Rodi* (Naples 1997) 23–38. For Panaetius' real influence on Scipio's political course—an influence which was probably rather limited—see A.E. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus* (Oxford 1967) 299.

[4] In *Per*. 16.7, Plutarch even calls Anaxagoras τῆς πολιτείας σύμβουλον; See also Plu., *Max. cum princ*. 777A. See further I. Scott-Kilvert, *Plutarch. Life of Pericles. A Companion to*

Yet such mutual goodwill and eagerness for collaboration do not remove all difficulties. For in spite of their friendship, the politician and the philosopher both have their own domain and their own concerns and ideals, which presuppose different talents and experiences.[5] And these differences often made their communication difficult. Particularly illustrative in this respect may well be Trajan's repeated saying to Dio of Prusa: "I do not know what you say, but I love you as myself".[6] No less telling is the position of Marcus Aurelius, who combined the position of ruler and philosopher but gave up Plato's political ideal of the *Republic*.[7] And it was not really exceptional that the dialogue between famous philosophers and powerful rulers in the end yielded particularly bitter fruits. Plato's unsuccessful attempts to educate Dionysius, or the gradual alienation between Aristotle and Alexander, are only two of the most famous examples.

Without doubt, one of the most discussed examples of a philosopher's association with a statesman is Socrates' love for Alcibiades. Shortly after Socrates' death, the topic already received ample attention and continued to do so for ages. This great and age-long interest can in the first place be explained by the idiosyncrasy of both protagonists. Alcibiades was a singular figure with a brilliant and, to say the least, highly exceptional career. Socrates for his part was no less remarkable, and in Plato's *Symposium*, the persona of Alcibiades says himself that it is difficult to recount Socrates' oddity (ἀτοπίαν).[8] But there is more to it than just the eccentricity or reputation of both. The whole discussion should also be understood against the background of Socrates' trial and condemnation, which soon stimulated Socrates' friends to write *Apologies*[9] but also elicited (counter-)attacks, the most influential of which was in all likelihood that of Polycrates. He proba-

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the Penguin Translation from The Rise and Fall of Athens (Bristol 1987) 33–34 and P.A. Stadter, *A Commentary on Plutarch's Pericles* (Chapel Hill–London 1989) 73–74.

[5] This point is made very well by Philodemus; see G. Roskam, *Live unnoticed* (*Λάθε βιώσας*). *On the Vicissitudes of an Epicurean Doctrine* (Leiden–Boston 2007) 104–125.

[6] Philostr., *VS* 1.7, 488.

[7] M.Ant. 9.29.

[8] Pl., *Smp*. 215A2–3.

[9] *Apologies of Socrates* were written by Crito (Suda 3.191.15) and Lysias (Plu., [*Dec. or. vit.*] 836B; Cic., *De orat*. 1.231; D.L. 2.40; Val.Max., 6.4 ext. 2; Stob. 3.7.56). Other Socratics who wrote works entitled *Alcibiades* are Aeschines of Sphettus (D.L. 2.61 and Suda 2.183.29–30; the fragments can be found in *SSR* VI A, 41–54; See K. Döring, "Der Sokrates des Aischines von Sphettos und die Frage nach dem historischen Sokrates", *Hermes* 112 (1984) 16–30 and G. Giannantoni, *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* (Naples 1990) IV, 586–591), Phaedo of Elis (Suda 4.707.30), Antisthenes (D.L. 2.61 and 6.18), and Euclides (D.L. 2.108 and Suda 2.454.12).

bly pointed to Socrates' association with Alcibiades in order to argue the charge of Socrates' supposed corruption of the young.[10] At stake, then, is both the credibility and moral excellence of Socrates himself and the justice or injustice of the Athenian judges in this *cause célèbre*. Moreover, the whole issue also raises an interesting philosophical problem. Socrates was convinced, as is well-known, that nobody willingly goes wrong. Alcibiades may well be the most obvious and challenging counter-example of this paradoxical view. For Alcibiades was brilliant himself and had in Socrates the best possible teacher. We may presume, then, that he knew that he was not perfect and often committed mistakes. He knew, in short, that he so often gave in to his ambition and had to be ashamed afterwards, when he recalled Socrates' advice.[11] In that sense, his behavior appeared to be the utter refutation of Socrates' position and as such raised interesting philosophical questions as well.

For all those reasons, the association between Socrates and Alcibiades was often discussed throughout antiquity, in many different contexts and authors. It was *gefundenes Fressen* for orators, who liked the topic as an interesting opportunity for a display of their rhetorical virtuosity. Maximus of Tyre, for instance, dealt at length with the theme of Socratic ἔρως[12] and Libanius later developed the topic in his *Apology of Socrates*.[13] But Socrates' love for Alcibiades also received much attention in later philosophical circles,[14] notably among the Platonists. In this paper, I focus on two such later Platonists, Plutarch and Proclus, who were both thoroughly familiar with

[10] It is impossible to tell with certainty whether Polycrates was the first to make this point, as F. Alesse, "Fonti socratiche e stoiche nella *Vita Alcibiadis*", in L. de Blois et al. (eds), *The Statesman in Plutarch's Works. Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the International Plutarch Society. Nijmegen/Castle Hernen, May 1–5, 2002*, II: *The Statesman in Plutarch's Greek and Roman* Lives (Leiden–Boston 2005) 190, believes not without plausibility. He may also have replied to previous *Apologies*. We simply do not know.

[11] See Pl., *Smp*. 216B2–6.

[12] For Maximus' interpretation of Socrates, see K. Döring, *Exemplum Socratis. Studien zur Sokratesnachwirkung in der kynisch-stoischen Popularphilosophie der frühen Kaiserzeit und im frühen Christentum* (Wiesbaden 1979) 130–138; M. Szarmach, *Maximos von Tyros. Eine literarische Monographie* (Torun 1985) 24–35 (and see 71–82); J. Puiggali, *Étude sur les Dialexeis de Maxime de Tyr, conférencier platonicien du IIème siècle* (Lille 1983) 95–108, 119–240 and 385–399.

[13] See Lib., *Decl*. 1.136–142 and 160; for a brief discussion of Libanius' *Apology*, see D.A. Russell, *Libanius. Imaginary Speeches. A Selection of Declamations Translated with Notes* (London 1996) 17–22.

[14] Favorinus of Arles, for instance, wrote a work *On Socrates and his Erotic Art*; see Suda 4.690.24–25; see A. Barigazzi, "Favorino di Arelate", *ANRW* II.34.1 (Berlin–New York 1993) 567.

Plato's works and with the previous Socratic and Academic tradition. What is their view on Socrates' intentions and on the fruits of his association with Alcibiades? And what did they think about the latter's response to Socrates' education and about his later career? What are the similarities and differences between both views and can there be detected any influence of Plutarch on Proclus?

2. *Plutarch's Life of Alcibiades*

Although Plutarch frequently deals with Socrates' education of the youth in general, and particularly with the philosopher's association with Alcibiades, the key text in his works is without doubt the first section of his *Life of Alcibiades* (more precisely the chapters 4–7).

2.1. *The Content and Orientation of Socrates' Education*

Socrates' importance for Alcibiades' great reputation is already anticipated in the first chapter, where Plutarch argues that it is thanks to the goodwill (εὐνοίας) and kindliness (φιλανθρωπίας) which Socrates showed Alcibiades that we even know the names of the latter's nurse and tutor.[15] When he returns to the topic in chapter 4, Plutarch significantly begins by diametrically opposing Socrates to Alcibiades' many other lovers.[16] These other lovers obviously had negative intentions, and as such were a source of corruption. It is against this corruptive influence that Socrates wants to protect (4.1: ἀμύνειν) the young aristocratic man. From the very beginning, the emphasis thus falls on Socrates' *protective* function. Moreover, the tension between Socrates and the other lovers is paralleled by a tension in the person of Alcibiades himself. In a certain sense, the opposite reactions which Alcibiades provokes can indeed be traced back to the (budding) opposition of two components in his own person. On the one hand, the young politician is exceptionally fair (cf. 4.1: τὴν λαμπρότητα τῆς ὥρας) and rich and distinguished (4.1: τὸν πλοῦτον καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα), and this aspect of his personality strongly attracts the other lovers. On the other hand, he was no less gifted and showed a promising potential for virtue (4.1: τῆς πρὸς ἀρετὴν εὐφυΐας τοῦ παιδός), and this, of course, was what Socrates appreciated so much in the young man.

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[15] Plu., *Alc.* 1.3.
[16] Plu., *Alc.* 4.1.

This moral interest also determines the content and orientation of Socrates' education. Although the whole section remains rather vague about the precise content of Socrates' conversations with Alcibiades,[17] Plutarch makes it very clear that the philosopher did not pursue "unmanly", corporeal pleasures[18] but directed his attention entirely to Alcibiades' soul.[19] His educative method is that of the ἔλεγχος (4.3: ἐλέγχοντος) and his goal is moral improvement (more specifically exposing the weakness of Alcibiades' soul and putting down his conceit or τῦφος). In spite of the conciseness of Plutarch's account, then, there can be no doubt about the overall orientation of Socrates' educational "program". Elsewhere, however, Plutarch provides more detailed information about Socrates' general approach. This may well be the appropriate place for a brief excursus.

In Plutarch's view, the goal of Socrates' ἔλεγχος is the therapy of the soul.[20] His elenctic questions do away with passions and self-conceit,[21] and the ἔλεγχος can be regarded as a purgative medicine,[22] which, by the way, can be quite harsh,[23] as Alcibiades himself could testify.[24] It is this aspect of the Socratic ἔλεγχος that is indirectly emphasized in this whole section of Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades* too. Yet the ἔλεγχος also has a more positive aspect. It causes "labor pains" and thus brings the insights to the surface which are already present in the interlocutor.[25] Socrates' ἔλεγχος, then, is closely connected with his maieutic skill, and this aspect of his approach is far less harsh. In such a context, Socrates appears as a stimulating teacher who raises interesting questions in order to initiate friendly conversations[26] and searches for the truth together with his interlocutors without claiming

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[17] See C. Pelling, "Plutarch's Socrates", *Hermathena* 179 (2005) 105–140 at 120: "What we do *not* get here is much interest in exactly what Socrates taught him—what, for instance, Socrates might have said about Athenian democracy and all its faults: Socrates is virtue, Socrates is reasoned argument, Socrates is encouragement to know oneself, but it is what he embodied and how he went about it that matters, not what he believed or said".

[18] This was especially illustrated by the famous anecdote about Alcibiades' unsuccessful attempt to seduce Socrates. Plutarch refers to the story in *De Alex. fort.* 333A.

[19] Plu., *Alc.* 4.3–4.

[20] Plu., *Qu. Plat.* 1000C–D.

[21] Plu., *Qu. Plat.* 999E.

[22] Plu., *Qu. Plat.* 999E (καθαρτικὸν φάρμακον).

[23] See Plu., *Quomod. adul.* 70F.

[24] See Pl., *Smp.* 218A2–7, to which Plutarch alludes in *Alc.* 4.2 (δῆγμὸν ἔχουσιν); see also *Quomod. adul.* 69F and *Cat. mai.* 7.1.

[25] Plu., *Qu. Plat.* 1000E.

[26] Plu., *De garr.* 512B.

any knowledge himself.[27] This positive aspect of Socrates' education receives far less attention in the *Life of Alcibiades*, where Socrates has mainly a protective function, averting the pernicious influences of Alcibiades' other lovers through his purifying ἔλεγχος.

2.2. *The Results of Socrates' Education*

We may well begin with the two passages in Plutarch's œuvre which contain a fairly negative evaluation of Socrates' accomplishments. Cato the Elder blamed the philosopher for being "a mighty prattler, who attempted, as best as he could, to be his country's tyrant, by abolishing its customs, and by enticing his fellow citizens into opinions contrary to the laws",[28] but this view is obviously not endorsed by Plutarch and surely tells us much more about Cato himself than about Socrates.[29] Much more interesting in this context is a passage from *De Alexandri fortuna aut virtute*, where Alexander's pupils are compared to those of Socrates and Plato. The latter had brilliant students such like Critias, Alcibiades and Cleitophon, yet these spat out their words and perverted them, whereas Alexander succeeded in educating whole barbarian peoples.[30] For once, Plutarch thus calls attention to Socrates' utter failure, yet it is probably no coincidence that he does this precisely in the highly rhetorical context of *De Alexandri fortuna aut virtute*, where he is singing the praises of Alexander, the "philosopher in action". In such a perspective, even the impressive achievements of Socrates and Plato may temporarily be bracketed, although the picture is to a certain extent corrected in later chapters.[31] Moreover, even in such a context, Plutarch nowhere suggests that Socrates or Plato corrupted their students: they were only unable to persuade them (οὐκ ἔπεισαν), and the students themselves are the ones who have turned their back on the philosophers' honorable doctrines. The implication is clear enough: Socrates and Plato are not to be blamed for the wicked behavior of their students, since their doctrines were honorable but unfortunately fell on deaf ears.

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[27] Plu., *Quomod. adul.* 72A and *Qu. Plat.* 999F. On Socrates as an ideal teacher in the *Corpus Plutarcheum*, see G. Roskam, "From Stick to Reasoning. Plutarch on the Communication between Teacher and Pupil", *WS* 117 (2004) 108.

[28] Plu., *Cat. mai.* 23.1 (translation *LCL*).

[29] See Pelling, "Plutarch's Socrates", 114.

[30] Plu., *De Alex. fort.* 328BC.

[31] Plu., *De Alex. fort.* 330C (on the moral excellence of Aristippus, one of Socrates' disciples). See also 330F–331A and 333A.

On others, however, Socrates exerted a strikingly positive influence. The example par excellence is Plato himself,[32] but he was certainly not the only one. Aeschines, another student of Socrates, likewise showed moral excellence and was also able to make others good.[33] Aristippus was struck by Socrates' words and soon learned to know the purpose of the latter's philosophy, that is, to know and cure one's own shortcomings.[34] This goal, ἐπιγνῶναι τὰ ἑαυτοῦ κακά, is an interesting moralizing reinterpretation and reorientation of the traditional Delphic γνῶθι σαυτόν.[35]

Aristippus' reaction to Socrates' words bears close resemblance to that of Alcibiades. As soon as the latter was captivated by Socrates' words, he showed himself very harsh towards the other lovers[36] and began to be fond of Socrates alone, eating and exercizing together with him and sharing his tent.[37] He even

> … came to think that the work of Socrates (τὸ μὲν Σωκράτους … πρᾶγμα) was really a kind of provision of the gods (θεῶν ὑπηρεσίαν) for the care and salvation of youth (εἰς νέων ἐπιμέλειαν … καὶ σωτηρίαν).
>
> (4.4; translation *LCL*)

This is a particularly interesting adaptation and refiguration of material which Plutarch found in Plato and in the Academic philosophical tradition. In the Platonic *Symposium*, Alcibiades tries to seduce Socrates in order to discover the latter's πρᾶγμα[38] but his attempts are doomed to failure. According to this passage from the *Life of Alcibiades*, on the other hand, Alcibiades has apparently gained insight into this πρᾶγμα, and this even without seduction. Furthermore, his view more or less coincides both with what Socrates tells about himself in the *Apology*—namely that his (moral) education of the youth was nothing less than a divine mission[39]—and with

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[32] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 717D–E.

[33] Plu., *Quomod. adul*. 67D.

[34] Plu., *De curios*. 516C.

[35] On Socrates' pursuit of self-knowledge, see also Plu., *Adv. Col*. 1118C and F.

[36] Plu., *Alc*. 4.2 and 4.5–6.

[37] Plu., *Alc*. 4.4. That Socrates and Alcibiades were tent-mates is probably Plutarch's own invention. See T. Duff, "Plato's *Symposium* and Plutarch's *Alcibiades*", in J. Ribeiro Ferreira et al. (eds), *Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch* (Coimbra 2009) 46.

[38] Pl., *Smp*. 217C6; on Socrates' πρᾶγμα, see also *Ap*. 20C4–5; *Cri*. 53C9–D1; *Alc*. 1.104D4. See the brief comment of E. de Strycker & S.R. Slings, *Plato's Apology of Socrates. A Literary and Philosophical Study with a Running Commentary* (Leiden 1994) 268, and the lengthy interpretation of L. Noussan-Lettry, *Spekulatives Denken in Platons Frühschriften. Apologie und Kriton* (Freiburg–Munich 1974) 43–119 (*passim*).

[39] See Pl., *Ap*. 30A7 (τὴν ἐμὴν τῷ θεῷ ὑπηρεσίαν). See also 23A5–c1; 28E4–6; 30D8–31B5.

Polemo's definition of love.[40] Plutarch's technique of focalization thus subtly entails a telling refutation of the charge against Socrates: even Alcibiades, whose later career could provide the obvious illustration of Socrates' supposed corruptive influence, emphasizes Socrates' moral excellence and (anachronistically) shows that he himself endorsed the Academic interpretation of educative ἔρως. At this point of the *Life*, then, Socrates' positive influence on Alcibiades appears to be entirely predominant and unrivaled.

Yet this picture is adjusted in what follows. At the outset of chapter 6, Plutarch still insists on the prevalence of Socrates' love for Alcibiades and on the latter's natural talents (εὐφυΐα), yet the other lovers also make their reappearance and sometimes even prove successful as well.[41] Socrates thus has to remedy whenever Alcibiades goes wrong. To a certain extent, he seems to lose at least part of the initiative, although he still appears to play by far the most important role, since after all, Alcibiades only fears Socrates and despises all the rest of his lovers.[42] As Plutarch goes on, however, the corrupting influence of the other lovers gradually becomes even more important. Alcibiades is prone to pleasure and is especially ambitious,[43] and the intervals of moral wickedness begin to be more frequent, as appears from the phrase ὁσάκις ἀναλάβοι ("whenever he received him").[44] Again and again, Socrates has to intervene, so that one begins to wonder whether he is not undergoing rather than controlling the situation. Yet even in this chapter, it is Socrates who has the last word, and his influence on Alcibiades is obviously for the better, reducing as it does the young man's vanity and wantonness and enhancing the latter's insight in his shortcomings.[45]

At this point, the topic of Socrates' education almost completely disappears. In chapter 7, Plutarch briefly recalls how Alcibiades was saved by Socrates during the battle of Potidaea and how Alcibiades later returned the favor after the battle of Delium.[46] Their mutual assistance does not merely suggest more permanent feelings of goodwill but even an ideal love relation,[47] and once again, Socrates is primarily concerned with moral edifica-

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[40] See Polemo, *Ad princ. inerud.* 780D. See J. Dillon, "A Platonist *Ars Amatoria*", *CQ* 44 (1994) 387–392 at 390 n. 7.

[41] Plu., *Alc.* 6.1.

[42] Plu., *Alc.* 6.1.

[43] Plu., *Alc.* 6.2–4.

[44] Plu., *Alc.* 6.5.

[45] Plu., *Alc.* 6.5.

[46] Plu., *Alc.* 7.3–6.

[47] See T. Duff, "Plato's *Symposium* and Plutarch's *Alcibiades*", 46, who points to the importance of Pl., *Smp.* 178E–179B, where "Phaedrus imagines pairs of *erastai* and *paidika* fighting

tion, since he tries to increase Alcibiades' ambition in honorable things.[48] But apart from this brief allusion, Plutarch keeps silent about Socrates' influence on Alcibiades, and when the account of Alcibiades' political career starts, Socrates almost entirely disappears.[49] This silence is embarrassing and may puzzle the reader. What about Socrates' relevance for Alcibiades' later career? Did his philosophical "therapy" leave any traces at all or should it be regarded as a complete failure? Quite remarkably, Plutarch never explicitly answers or even asks these questions—important though they are—, not even in the concluding *synkrisis*. In the end, the reader should make his own judgement[50] on the basis of the general information which is given in the earlier chapters.[51] But in view of these chapters, where Socrates' education always appears as honorable and directed at moral improvement, and the rest of the *Life*, which suggests that Socrates was not involved at all in the *peripeteiai* of Alcibiades' later career, there can hardly be any doubt that Plutarch himself sided with the true judges, the only ones who really deserved this name,[52] and that he fully acquitted Socrates from the charge of corrupting the young.

3. *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Alcibiades I*

With Proclus we turn to the Neoplatonic Academy at Athens in the 5th century AD. At that moment, Platonism had long developed into an hierarchically systematized thinking where philosophizing primarily amounted

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side by side, defending each other on the battlefield", and concludes that "Plutarch thus assimilates Alcibiades and Socrates to this kind of idealized pederastic couple".

[48] Plu., *Alc*. 7.5: ὁ Σωκράτης βουλόμενος αὔξεσθαι τὸ φιλότιμον ἐν τοῖς καλοῖς αὐτοῦ. The phrase τὸ φιλότιμον ἐν τοῖς καλοῖς recalls Pl., *Smp*. 178D2. See Duff, "Plato's *Symposium* and Plutarch's *Alcibiades*", 48.

[49] The only exception is *Alc*. 17.5, where Plutarch most interestingly recalls Socrates' opposition to the Sicilian expedition. The only time Socrates is still mentioned, he is thus—correctly—opposed to Alcibiades' ambitious military project.

[50] See on this C. Pelling, "Plutarch", in I. de Jong et al. (eds), *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature. Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, I (Leiden–Boston 2004) 413–415, and for a general interpretation of the moral problematizing in the *Lives*, T. Duff, *Plutarch's* Lives. *Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford 1999).

[51] Interesting information about Plutarch's evaluation of the association between Socrates and Alcibiades, and particularly about the importance of Alcibiades' weakness, can be derived from the treatise *De profectibus in virtute*; see further G. Roskam, *On the Path to Virtue. The Stoic Doctrine of Moral Progress and its Reception in* (*Middle-*)*Platonism* (Leuven 2005) 325–326 and 357–358.

[52] See Pl., *Ap*. 40A3.

to writing commentaries on Plato. Like all the Neoplatonists, Proclus did not imitate Socrates in bringing down philosophy from heaven to the cities:[53] he rather called it back, being mainly interested in metaphysics and theology.[54] Yet he did not ignore the problem of Socrates' association with Alcibiades but even discussed this topic at great length in his *Commentary on Plato's Alcibiades I*, which is the key text for our purposes.

3.1. *The Content and Orientation of Socrates' Education*

Throughout the whole *Commentary on Plato's Alcibiades I*, Proclus underlines that Socrates did not corrupt Alcibiades at all but rather had a particularly positive influence on him. Proclus indeed understands the relation of the philosopher and the politician against the background of moral education, and just like Plutarch, he distinguishes between three different parties. (1) Alcibiades' other lovers are the source of moral corruption. They are only interested in Alcibiades' corporeal beauty and abandon their beloved as soon as his youthful bloom disappears.[55] Plato refers to these lovers as to a disordered crowd (ὄχλος): a confused multiplicity inclined to passions.[56] They can be compared to wicked demons who "divert the young man from the anagogic ascent towards the divinity and render him inapt for the association with the divinely inspired lover".[57] (2) Diametrically opposed to these vulgar lovers is Socrates, the first and last lover of Alcibiades, even his One and only lover, as opposed to the pluriform multiplicity of the ordinary lovers.[58] Whereas the latter can be compared to base demons, Socrates is often regarded as a kind of good demon who silently guides Alcibiades towards the better goal.[59] Socrates' care for Alcibiades can even be regarded

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[53] Cic., *Tusc*. 5.10; see *Acad. post*. 1.15.

[54] See, for example, P. Bastid, *Proclus et le crépuscule de la pensée grecque* (Paris 1969) 398: "Mais dans le prolongement naturel du platonisme, Proclus n'a pas retenu toutes les composantes attendues. Il a même négligé la principale. Platon était avant tout un constructeur politique. […] Or, Proclus semble indifférent aux constitutions, comme si l'ardeur réformatrice qui avait soulevé Platon et animé encore Aristote se trouvait à tout jamais éteinte". For the importance of politics in Neoplatonism in general, see D.J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 2003).

[55] Procl., *In Alc*. 35.19–24; see also 38.18–19.

[56] Procl., *In Alc*. 56.20–58.10 (the reference is to Pl., *Alc*. 1.103A3).

[57] Procl., *In Alc*. 40.8–12; see also 45.10–11.

[58] Procl., *In Alc*. 37.19–39.6 (on Pl., *Alc*. 1.103A1–3). In a certain sense, the whole commentary—or at least important sections from it—can be understood as a kind of Neoplatonist *ars amatoria*. See J. Dillon, "A Platonist *Ars Amatoria*".

[59] Procl., *In Alc*. 40.17–42.3; 45.9–10; 50.8–9; 61.8–10; 95.2; 198.14–199.23; 281.17–282.11.

as an image of divine providence.[60] (3) Between these two poles is Alcibiades, a particularly gifted young man with a good nature (εὐφυής).[61] As such, he far surpasses his wicked lovers, whose company he does not completely avoid, to be sure, though without allowing them to touch him and without sharing their vices, thus showing the correct attitude towards the passions.[62] But although Alcibiades shows natural virtues, he is still far from perfect. In fact, he is the example *par excellence* of the ambitious young man,[63] and although even this ambition is a clear indication of his great talents–φιλοτιμία being the "ultimate tunic of the soul"[64]—, it remains a passion that should be overcome.

Socrates' task thus consists in providing Alcibiades with an appropriate education.[65] On the one hand, he saves him from the pernicious influence of the multitude[66] and of the sophists.[67] This is Socrates' *protective* function, which is strongly emphasized in Plutarch but is somewhat less important in Proclus.[68] The latter rather underlines Socrates' *protreptic* function: the philosopher, a real competitor for the truth (ἀγωνιστὴς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀλήθειας),[69] continuously urges Alcibiades on to virtue.[70] He has to free the young man from his vain self-conceit[71] and his double ignorance,[72] and to that

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[60] Procl., *In Alc.* 53.19–56.3.

[61] On Alcibiades' intermediate position, see Procl., *In Alc.* 43.18–23; 159.12–15; 218.11–17; on his εὐφυΐα, see *In Alc.* 166.21; 167.7; 235.5–6; 239.15–16; 298.19; 299.23–25.

[62] Procl., *In Alc.* 58.11–59.22. See also 97.11–99.5.

[63] See Procl., *In Alc.* 166.23–24; 167.5–6; 219.2–3; 243.11; 306.15–19.

[64] Procl., *In Alc.* 138.15–139.9.

[65] Throughout the commentary, Proclus' focus is on Socrates' usefulness for Alcibiades alone, ignoring the implications which Alcibiades' moral improvement might have for the whole of Athens. That Socrates' association with Alcibiades can also be defended by pointing to the social benefits which it could entail appears from a passage from Proclus' *Commentary in Plato's Timaeus*. There, he finds in *Ti.* 19C1–8 "a concise defence of Socrates having associated with Alcibiades and Plato's visit to Dionysius. Both expected that they would become manufacturers of a decent constitution (δημιουργοὶ πολιτείας … χρηστῆς), and that they would see constitutional life in action" (*In Ti.* I, 61.12–15; translation H. Tarrant).

[66] Procl., *In Alc.* 243.7–244.13.

[67] Procl., *In Alc.* 253.10–17.

[68] Although it does appear here and there in the commentary; see Procl., *In Alc.* 43.21; 154.10–16.

[69] Procl., *In Alc.* 313.14–15.

[70] For Proclus' view on virtue in his *Commentary on Plato's Alcibiades I*, see E. Moutsopoulos, "La notion d'*arété* dans le commentaire de Proclus sur le *Premier Alcibiade* de Platon", *Areté* 11 (1999) 271–280.

[71] Procl., *In Alc.* 304.7–8.

[72] Procl., *In Alc.* 304.5–6. See also 8.20–21. On the important theme of double ignorance, see Procl., *In Alc.* 102.24–26; 174.2–175.18; 188.23–191.4; 201.2–10; D.A. Layne, "Refutation and Double Ignorance in Proclus", *Epoché* 13 (2009) 347–362.

purpose makes use of a particularly gradual and careful approach, taking into account possible impediments and strategically mixing praise with blame.[73] In his running commentary, Proclus time and again shows how methodically Socrates actually deals with Alcibiades. One by one, possible obstacles are carefully removed, whereas the desire for true knowledge is continuously stimulated.

Especially interesting here is Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Alc.* 1.105C6–D5, a passage where Socrates tells Alcibiades that he will be unable to accomplish his great plans without Socrates' assistance. This raises the question as to whether Socrates did not make Alcibiades unduly fond of rule (φίλαρχος). Was Socrates, then, not a source of corruption after all? Would he not better eradicate such a passion rather than appealing to it? Proclus' answer to this problem, which obviously has far-reaching implications for the general moral value of Socrates' education, again emphasizes the gradual character of Socrates' approach. Passions are generally harsh and resistent, particularly those of the spirited part of the soul, and an ambitious character is inclined to oppose the man who tries to educate it. For that reason, Socrates should not immediately try to do away with Alcibiades' ambition, but should rather attempt to gradually lead it in the correct direction.[74] It is clear that this view is perfectly in line with the overall message of the commentary: Socrates definitely did not corrupt Alcibiades but rather educated him towards moral virtue. That Alcibiades later completely yielded to his great ambition and even to the desires of his ἐπιθυμητικόν, is almost completely ignored.

3.2. *The Results of Socrates' Education*

And yet, Proclus knew well enough the meager results of this high-minded philosophical education. In one crucial passage,[75] he deals with this problem in detail, asking himself why after all the δαιμόνιον allowed Socrates to associate with Alcibiades. For it is clear that the latter would not derive any benefit from it, as appears from those "great and tragic misfortunes" (τῶν μεγάλων ἐκείνων καὶ τραγικῶν δυστυχημάτων) which Athens had to suffer because of him. Proclus begins by recalling several traditional answers which in his view are utterly wrong or at least problematic[76] and therefore

[73] Procl., *In Alc.* 100.24–103.25.
[74] Procl., *In Alc.* 154.17–155.10.
[75] Procl., *In Alc.* 85.19–92.3 (commenting on Plato, *Alc.* 1.103A6–B2).
[76] Procl., *In Alc.* 86.9–88.13.

need not detain us any longer. Then he comes up with the solution of Iamblichus and Syrianus, which he himself endorses as well and which takes into account the δαιμόνιον, Socrates, and Alcibiades.

As far as the latter is concerned, Proclus quite confidently states that he did benefit from his conversations with Socrates. That this is the case appears, always according to Proclus, from Plato's *Symposium*, where Alcibiades, although drunk, rebukes himself for his ignorance and admires both the words of philosophy and Socrates.[77] In that sense, his association with Socrates significantly contributed to the perfection of his natural virtues.[78] Of course, so Proclus admits, Alcibiades also accomplished some wrongful actions (πέπρακταί τινα αὐτῷ πλημμελῆ), which are due to his imperfect nature. Socrates, indeed, has not turned the young man into a perfect sage: Alcibiades only benefited from his conversations with him.[79] This is a remarkable argument, to say the least. The "great and tragic misfortunes" which everybody knew well enough now reappear as τινα … πλημμελῆ. This is no small understatement, which should obviously be traced back to Proclus' own philosophical prejudice. In any case, it is much too biased, even intellectually unfair, in order to be convincing.

And Proclus probably knew this himself. For he goes on to argue that, even if Alcibiades did not derive any benefit from Socrates' words in this life, yet he will do so in his future lives, when he will be free from the present hindering factors and recall what Socrates told him.[80] It is clear that the starting point of this argument is the hypothesis that the previous one utterly fails to convince the reader. A better answer can be derived from the (Neo)Platonist doctrine of metempsychosis.

It is this perspective which also throws light on the demon's decision, for the demon surveys the whole cycle and is thus able to evaluate the implications which benefits in a previous life have for the next one.[81] Moreover, the demons (and the human sages) are good and willingly distribute good things, whereas it depends on the nature of the beneficiary whether their gifts are useful.[82]

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[77] Procl., *In Alc.* 89.3–13 (making use of Pl., *Smp.* 215B3, 216E6–217A1 [cf. 222A3–4] and 218A5–6).

[78] Procl., *In Alc.* 89.13–15.

[79] Procl., *In Alc.* 89.15–19.

[80] Procl., *In Alc.* 89.19–90.7.

[81] Procl., *In Alc.* 90.10–22.

[82] Procl., *In Alc.* 90.22–91.18.

As far as Socrates is concerned, finally, he never committed any wrong, and the fact that his education remained in the end unsuccessful does not detract at all from the value of his action, which actually had its end in itself.[83]

This passage, then, fits in very well with the general interpretative perspective of the whole commentary. Socrates' education of Alcibiades meets all moral criteria and proves to be in accordance with the will of the divine powers. Alcibiades, on the other hand, is the talented young man who is benefited by his association with Socrates. The embarrassing fact that he also became the source of much misfortune for Athens is either ignored or explained away: in light of a perspective of metempsychosis, this is only a minor detail. And about such details, a Neoplatonist need not be concerned, of course.

4. *Different Voices, the Same Refrain*

The above discussion of the views of both Plutarch and Proclus has shown that their interpretation of Socrates' association with Alcibiades basically agrees. Quite remarkably, and perhaps contrary to many of Socrates' own contemporaries,[84] neither tries to deny Socrates' great influence on Alcibiades. Both even presume that this influence was fairly strong, and the reason of this is obvious: Plato himself suggested (most notably in his *Symposium*) that Alcibiades fell under the spell of Socrates. The task of Plutarch and Proclus is to interpret the information which Plato told them and their interpretation is fundamentally similar: Alcibiades was a gifted young man who had a distinct preference for Socrates. The source of his ultimate corruption were Alcibiades' other lovers, but neither Plutarch nor Proclus pay much attention to this philosophically embarrassing—or say, "less interesting"—part of the story.

In view of this general resemblance between the position of both authors, one may well wonder whether Proclus was influenced by Plutarch. In all likelihood, this influence, if it existed at all, was fairly limited.[85] Occasionally,

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[83] Procl., *In Alc*. 91.18–22.

[84] SeeTh.C. Brickhouse & N.D. Smith, *Socrates on Trial* (Princeton 1989) 82–87, who argue that Socrates' association with Alcibiades was not a specific concern to the jurors. See also Isocrates 11,5, who denies that Alcibiades was a student of Socrates.

[85] As it was for Proclus' interpretation of the *Timaeus*. On Proclus' critical reception of Plutarch's *Timaeus* interpretation, see A. Rescigno, "Proclo lettore di Plutarco?", in I. Gallo (ed.), *L'eredità culturale di Plutarco dall'antichità al rinascimento. Atti del VII Convegno plutar-*

Proclus seems to have borrowed historical information about Alcibiades from Plutarch,[86] although Plutarch was not necessarily his only source for such material.[87] It is important, though, that Plutarch is never mentioned by name, and if he is referred to, he is quoted as a historian, never as a philosopher.[88]

All this suggests that Proclus probably read Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades* in preparing his commentary and that he regarded this only as a *historical* source. The *Life* indeed contained interesting historical information which Proclus could use, but it did not contribute to his general philosophical interpretation of the relation between Socrates and Alcibiades. In this he rather followed Iamblichus and Syrianus. One may add that Plutarch's account was based on many sources[89] (including several Socratic authors,[90] and esp. Plato's *Symposium*[91]), but was only little influenced by the Platonic *Alcibiades I*,[92] the text which Proclus comments section by section.

Furthermore, both authors have a different purpose. In Plutarch's biographical project, the analysis of Alcibiades' character is of central importance and in such a context the latter's education is highly relevant. Socrates' role, on the other hand, is hardly discussed for its own sake. It is important to the extent that it enables us to come to a better understanding of

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cheo. Milano–Gargnano, 28–30 maggio 1997 (Naples 1998) 111–141 and J. Opsomer, "Neoplatonist Criticisms of Plutarch", in A. Pérez Jiménez & F. Casadesús Bordoy (eds), *Estudios sobre Plutarco. Misticismo y religiones místericas en la obra de Plutarco. Actas del VII Simposio Español sobre Plutarco* (*Palma de Mallorca, 2–4 de Noviembre de 2000*) (Madrid–Malaga 2001) 187–199. On the other hand, Plutarch's influence on Proclus' *Commentary on Hesiod's Opera* was very great; see Ch. Faraggiana di Sarzana, "Il commentario procliano alle *Opere e I giorni*", *Aevum* 52 (1978) 17–40 and "Le commentaire à Hésiode et la *paideia* encyclopédique de Proclus", in J. Pépin & H.D. Saffrey (eds), *Proclus. Lecteur et interprète des anciens. Actes du colloque international du CNRS. Paris* (*2–4 octobre 1985*) (Paris 1987) 21–22 and 33–41. See also M. van der Valk, "A Fragment of Plutarch?", *Mnemosyne* 39 (1986) 399.

[86] See A.Ph. Segonds, *Proclus. Sur le Premier Alcibiade de Platon* (Paris 1985/6) xiv, n. 5. See also *In Alc*. 147.15–17 on Pericles.

[87] On the many important sources which contain historical information about Alcibiades (such as Thucydides and Xenophon), see S. Verdegem, *Plutarch's* Life of Alcibiades. *Story, Text and Moralism* (Leuven 2010) 35–58. It is important to note that, contrary to Plutarch, Thucydides is quoted *nominatim*; see *In Alc*. 115.3. Xenophon is mentioned only once (*In Alc*. 86.20), but for a philosophical view, not for historical information.

[88] See Procl., *In Alc*. 86.6 (ὧν αἱ ἱστορίαι πλήρεις) and 110.12–13 (τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας δῆλον).

[89] A convenient survey can be found in Verdegem, *Plutarch's Life of Alcibiades*, 399–401.

[90] Alesse, "Fonti socratiche".

[91] Duff, "Plato's *Symposium* and Plutarch's *Alcibiades*".

[92] There may be some influence in Plu., *Alc*. 1.1 and 1.3. See Verdegem, *Plutarch's Life of Alcibiades*, 64 and 399.

Alcibiades' character and disappears from the rest of the *Life*. Moreover, Plutarch's *Lives* are *Parallel Lives*, which implies that the preceding *Life of Coriolanus* is highly relevant as well.[93] The theme of Coriolanus' lack of education, and all the problems this entails, gives the following *Life of Alcibiades* an additional dimension.[94] Proclus, on the other hand, wants to provide a systematic explanation of the *Alcibiades I*. This, of course, implies a different and no less specific focus. For Proclus, ἱστορία is only a vague starting point for lengthy philosophical reflections on a particular Platonic text. But even though these reflections are to a certain extent conditioned by the text he is commenting upon, this does not mean that Proclus' interpretative freedom was completely annihilated by this text. More than once, one word is used as the point of departure for elaborate discussions and digressions and thus provides the opportunity to fully expound different aspects of Proclus' Neoplatonic system.

There can be little doubt, then, that Proclus was the more systematic philosopher of both. In his philosophical garden, most plants are carefully pruned, the paths are quite symmetrical, and everything is well irrigated and in harmony. Plutarch's philosophical garden may have been a little less systematic, with perhaps, here and there, a flower that does not completely fit in with the overall structure of the garden, but surely it was no less attractive. After all, both gardens received their water from the ever flowing sources of Plato himself.

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[93] On the importance of reading the *Lives* in pairs, see H. Erbse, "Die Bedeutung der Synkrisis in den Parallelbiographien Plutarchs", *Hermes* 89 (1956) 257–287 and Ph. Stadter, "Plutarch's Comparison of Pericles and Fabius Maximus", *GRBS* 16 (1975) 77–85, and more recently D.H.J. Larmour, "Making Parallels: *Synkrisis* and Plutarch's 'Themistocles and Camillus'", *ANRW* II.33.6 (Berlin–New York 1992) 4154–4200; Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*; H. Beck, "Interne 'Synkrisis' bei Plutarch", *Hermes* 130 (2002) 467–489; C. Pelling, *Plutarch and History. Eighteen Studies* (London 2002) 349–363 (with much further bibliography) and idem, "*Synkrisis* revisited", in A. Pérez Jiménez & F. Titchener (eds), *Historical and Biographical Values of Plutarch's Works. Studies Devoted to Professor Philip A. Stadter by the International Plutarch Society* (Malaga–Logan 2005) 325–340.

[94] See on this esp. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 205–221.

SALT IN THE HOLY WATER: PLUTARCH'S *QUAESTIONES NATURALES* IN MICHAEL PSELLUS' *DE OMNIFARIA DOCTRINA*[*]

Michiel Meeusen

1. *Is There a Philosopher in This Empire?*

Michael Psellus (*c.* 1018–after 1078) was hailed in his day as "the lamp of wisdom" and the "heavenly light",[1] and he himself claimed to have read all the extant Greek and Barbaric literature.[2] His *De omnifaria doctrina* is a wonderful sample card of his vast knowledge of ancient sources, competently compiled[3] in a compendium of general information that he dedicated to the emperor.[4] The relationship between encyclopedic knowledge and imperial power is not without interest, as it provides an understanding of what highly placed Byzantine figures were expected to know, or, at the very least, to have read. Psellus was clearly no stranger to the art of bragging, but even so, by the time he had reached his early thirties, he did hold the position of

[*] Special thanks are due to Prof. Dr. L. Van der Stockt and Prof. Dr. G. Roskam for their careful reading of this paper and for their useful remarks and corrections.

[1] See Psellus, *Ep. ad Mich. Cer.* 104: λύχνος σοφίας and φωστήρ. According to Anna Comnena, *Alex.* 5.8.3.11–12, Psellus reached a level of "perfection of all knowledge" (εἰς ἄκρον σοφίας ἁπάσης ἐληλακώς).

[2] See Psellus, *Enc. in ma.* 28.1809–1810. See also E. Kriaras, "Psellus", *RE Suppl.* XI (1968) 1131, 24–26.

[3] On Psellus' compilatory talent, see T. Döhner, "Zu Michael Psellus und Plutarch, eine Notiz für herrn Bussemaker in Paris", *Philologus* 14 (1859) 407–410 at 409–410.

[4] According to manuscripts Matr. gr. 51 and Athous 4310, the first redaction of the work (below), which deals with physics, was addressed to Constantine IX Monomachus, who reigned over the Byzantine empire from 1042 to 1054. The emperor is invited by the author to consult him on matters of geometry, which may be unfamiliar to an imperial ear (127.13–15; 143.11–13). This first redaction has been dated to around 1050. In the second redaction of the work (1–14), which deals with theological matters, Psellus addressed emperor Michael VII Ducas, a disciple of his, who reigned over the empire from 1071 to 1078. See 6.4: σύ, ὁ βασιλεὺς Μιχαήλ. See also 3.2; 4.4–5; 12.2; 12.4; 12.37–38; 13.2; 201.2. The second redaction can be dated to around 1075. See L.G. Westerink, *Michael Psellus, De Omnifaria Doctrina* (Nijmegen 1948) 3–5.

consul of the philosophers (ὕπατος τῶν φιλοσόφων)[5] at the new Academy of Constantinople. He would soon come to realize that it is lonely at the top, as appears from his self-promoting assertion that he is "a lone philosopher in an age without philosophy".[6] Although Psellus is undoubtedly exaggerating here, this was almost certainly not just the bathetic outcry of a self-confident would-be intellectual. On the contrary, it would appear there was indeed a fundamental aversion in Byzantium to pagan and ancient Greek (or, in Byzantine terminology, "Hellenic") philosophy in general, as a strong preponderance towards Christian Orthodox dogma prevailed.[7] Moreover, Psellus aroused opposition among ecclesiastical scholars by his preference for Plato over Aristotle.[8] As a matter of fact, in this respect his light did indeed shine brighter than that of his contemporaries.

The status of philosophy in the Byzantine empire in Psellus' days can be inferred from its definition in the Suda: "philosophy is correct moral practice combined with a doctrine of true knowledge about Being. Jews and pagans (Ἕλληνες) have fallen short of this knowledge".[9] Byzantine ecclesiastics by no means regarded Hellenic philosophy as an *ancilla* of the Church, as manifestly appears from the condemnation in 1082 of John Italus, one of Psellus' students, for his endorsement of Platonic heresies. Psellus himself, however, was a flamboyant intellectual with a great interest in Hellenic philosophy in general and Plato in particular. Of the latter, he even says: "That's the kind of man he is; in an alien guise he mystically discourses on our theology and grasps no small fraction of the truth".[10] The old academic tradition in such metropoles as Athens and Alexandria had already died out by the early seventh century, but Platonism did not die with it. Psellus has been recognized

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[5] For further information on this title, see F. Fuchs, *Die höheren Schulen von Konstantinopel im Mittelalter* (Leipzig 1926) 50.

[6] Psellus, *Orat. min.*, op. 6.52: φιλοσοφῶ μόνος ἐν ἀφιλοσόφοις καιροῖς. See J. Duffy, "Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos", in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* (Oxford 2002) 152: "[H]e was indeed a *rara avis* and Byzantium did not see the likes of him either before or after his time."

[7] Even though the East-West Schism occurred in 1054, the opposition between the Orthodox and the Catholic Church is of no consequence to this paper (See 4.5; 10.2). I focus mainly on the contrast between Christianity and Hellenism.

[8] A. Fortescue, "Psellus", in C.G. Herbermann (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 12 (New York 1913) 545; C. Zervos, *Un philosophe néoplatonicien du XIe siècle. Michel Psellos: sa vie, son oeuvre, ses luttes philosophiques, son influence* (New York 1973 [1920]) 212–220.

[9] Suda 4.733: φιλοσοφία ἐστὶν ἠθῶν κατόρθωσις μετὰ δόξης τῆς περὶ τοῦ ὄντος γνώσεως ἀληθοῦς. ταύτης δὲ ἀπεσφάλησαν Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Ἕλληνες. See Duffy, "Psellos", 140–143.

[10] Psellus, *Theol.* I, 78.108–109: τοιοῦτος γὰρ ὁ ἀνήρ, ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ σχήματι ἀπορρήτως θεολογῶν τὰ ἡμέτερα καὶ οὐ πολλοστόν τι τῆς ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνων. Duffy, "Psellos", 147.

as a Neoplatonic philosopher with a particular preference for Iamblichus and Proclus, who under Constantine IX Monomachus preached Platonism to large audiences. This was a revolutionary thing to do, arousing suspicion and resistance on the part of the intellectual (i.e. religious) elite.[11] Two of the twelve anathemas in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, which sharply condemn John Italus' inclusion of Hellenic beliefs in the school curriculum, should suffice to illustrate the gravity of this controversy:

> Those who profess to be pious, but who in fact impudently or rather impiously introduce into the Orthodox and Catholic Church the impious beliefs of the Hellenes concerning human souls, heaven, earth and other creations, let them be anathematised! … Those who offer courses on Hellenic subjects and do not teach these subjects solely for the sake of education, but who follow the vain opinions of the Hellenes and believe in them as being true, and thus, considering them to be correct, induce others—either secretly or even publicly—to follow them and instruct them without second thoughts, let them be anathematised![12]

Psellus, who likewise taught such Ἑλληνικὰ μαθήματα, conveniently glossed over this heretic practice by making it absolutely clear that he taught them "solely for the sake of education". He justified this by pointing at the intellectual benefits of comprehensive knowledge (πολυμάθεια) and love of learning (φιλομάθεια), and by asserting that his inquiry into Hellenic matters was no idle curiosity (περιεργασία) but a consequence of his philosophical presupposition that "a philosopher needs to be a man of all sorts".[13] The Greek title of *De omnifaria doctrina*, viz. Διδασκαλία παντοδαπή (*Instruction of All Sorts*; *Manifold Teaching*), clearly suggests that it was Psellus' intention to

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[11] For the portrayal of Psellus as a genuine Platonist, a political philosopher and a cultural extremist favoring Hellenic religion, see A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia* (Leiden 1999) 15–22 (with further references).

[12] *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, 57–61 (Gouillard): Τοῖς εὐσεβεῖν μὲν ἐπαγγελλομένοις, τὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων δὲ δυσσεβῆ δόγματα τῇ ὀρθοδόξῳ καὶ καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ περί τε ψυχῶν ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων κτισμάτων ἀναιδῶς ἢ μᾶλλον ἀσεβῶς ἐπεισάγουσιν, ἀνάθεμα … Τοῖς τὰ ἑλληνικὰ διεξιοῦσι μαθήματα καὶ μὴ διὰ παίδευσιν μόνον ταῦτα παιδευομένοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ δόξαις αὐτῶν ταῖς ματαίαις ἑπομένοις καὶ ὡς ἀληθέσι πιστεύουσι, καὶ οὕτως αὐταῖς ὡς τὸ βέβαιον ἐχούσαις ἐγκειμένοις, ὥστε καὶ ἑτέρους ποτὲ μὲν λάθρᾳ, ποτὲ δὲ φανερῶς ἐνάγειν αυταῖς καὶ διδάσκειν ἀνενδοιάστως, ἀνάθεμα. The acts of the synod specifically mention Iamblichus and Proclus. For further commentary, see J. Gouillard, *Le synodikon de l'orthodoxie: édition et commentaire* (Paris, 1967) 188–202; P.A. Agapitos, "Teachers, Pupils and Imperial Power in Eleventh-Century Byzantium", in Y.L. Too & N. Livingstone (eds), *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning* (Cambridge 1998) 184–187 (his translation). See Anna Comnena, *Alex*. 5.8–9.

[13] Psellus, *Theol*. I, 114.1: δεῖ τὸν σοφὸν παντοδαπὸν εἶναι. See also Psellus, *Phil. min*. I, 7.117–118; 32.100–106.

enlighten his readership and bring it to a state of broad, encyclopedic learning, rather than to obstruct it on its way to Orthodox truth.[14]

In *De omnifaria doctrina* "Psellus therefore walks warily … and the orthodoxy of its theological sections is impeccable … It is perhaps worth adding at this point that no classical student will experience difficulty in reading this eleventh-century Greek treatise, which indeed consists almost wholly of extracts from earlier writers."[15] Hence the assertion that "the collection is characteristic of Psellus"[16] almost sounds as if it lacks in originality and vivacity, which, to an extent, is a legitimate comment. Psellus, in his scientific inquiries in *De omnifaria doctrina*, mainly relies on the consulted sources, but this does not make him a simple medieval copyist who transcribes ancient texts literally.[17] He reproduced only the essential parts of his sources and was frequently prepared to draw personal conclusions, which renders his inquiry at once more instructive. On occasion, Psellus actually demonstrates "une adroite curiosité"[18] for scientific inquiry. With regard to *De omnifaria doctrina* "[m]ost of the sections are quoted almost verbatim. Where Psellus conflates or abridges, he does so with the skill of a thoroughly competent man of letters, and the result is always smooth and readable".[19] In this sense, the collection of *De omnifaria doctrina* is perhaps more characteristic of Psellus as a "humanistic" philosopher than as a medieval copyist.[20]

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[14] Psellus, *Phil. min.* I, 7.117–123: Ταῦτα δὲ πάντα διηριθμησάμην ὁμοῦ μὲν ὑμᾶς εἰς πολυμάθειαν ἄγων, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ ταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς δόξαις ποιούμενος ἐντριβεῖς. καὶ οἶδα ὡς ἐνίαις γε τούτων ἀντιπεσεῖται τὰ ἡμέτερα δόγματα. ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐχ ὥστε τούτων ἐκεῖνα ἀνταλλάξασθαι διεσπούδασα πρὸς ὑμὰς -μαινοίμην γὰρ ἄν-, ἀλλ' ἵνα τούτοις μὲν ἦτε προσκείμενοι, ἐκείνων δὲ μόνον τὴν εἴδησιν ἔχητε. εἰ δέ πῃ καὶ συνεργοῖεν ὑμῖν πρὸς τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον διακινδυνεύοντα, καὶ χρήσασθε. "I have enumerated all these things in order to bring you to a state of broad learning as well as to make you acquainted with Hellenic doctrines. And I know that our dogmas will be in conflict with some of those doctrines. But it was not my intention to make you change the one for the other—which would be madness. I rather intended you to become devoted to the one and to take cognizance of the other. And if they by any chance can help you towards the truth, then use them". The intention expressed here is very similar to what is conveyed at the end of *De omnifaria doctrina* 201 (below).

[15] J.H. Sleeman, "Psellus", *CR* 63 (1949) 57–58 at 58.

[16] Westerink, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, 1.

[17] Note, however, that he is not always very critical. See Döhner, *Psellus und Plutarch*, 410: "Stellen, die ihm irgend welchen kritischen Scrupel machen konnten, oder in der von ihm gebrauchten Handschrift bereits corrumpirt oder lückenhaft waren, sind sorgfältig gemieden oder in psellianischer Weise vereinfacht".

[18] Zervos, *Psellos*, 110.

[19] Sleeman, "Psellus", 57.

[20] *Pace* Westerink, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, 1; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford 1984) 327 calls Psellus "the most outstanding figure of his age … the greatest

2. De omnifaria doctrina *and* Quaestiones Naturales

The overall aim and set-up of the encyclopedic *De omnifaria doctrina* is to present a compilation of varied problems that are not merely amassed under a general title, but that are also cleverly arranged and organized in a logical fashion. In conformity with Neoplatonic examples, the author tries to methodically compile and write down the entire span of human knowledge, beginning with questions concerning God, intelligence and the soul, which all belong to the intelligible world. Subsequently he delves into the sensible world of physics, physiology, astronomy and meteorology. For Platonic psychology and metaphysics, Psellus' main source is Proclus; for physics, physiology, and astronomy it is Plutarch; and for matters of meteorology, he relies on Olympiodorus' commentary on Aristotle's *Meteorologica* or on Aristotle directly.[21]

The genetic writing process of the work, as analyzed by Westerink, provides a more complex perspective on the methodological arrangement of the material. Westerink distinguishes between four different redactions, only the first of which contains the sections on physics. The second redaction consists in a series on theological subjects. The third and fourth are the result of a final systematic rearrangement of the work as a whole. "The plan is roughly: 1–20 theology, 21–65 psychology, 66–81 ethics, 82–107 physics, 108–119 physiology, 120–138 astronomy, 139–178 meteorology and cosmography".[22] Paragraphs 179–193 are the sections that remain from *Quaestiones Naturales* and *Table talks* from the first redaction. The third redaction includes a supplementary section (194–201), which is omitted in the fourth.

The arrangement of the first redaction is based on its sources (see Table 1). "The plan was obviously to deal with the subjects treated in [Ps.-]Plutarch's *Placita*, from which, however, as a rule only the headings of the sections are taken; in the second half a good deal of other matter is added".[23] In what follows, I focus primarily on the scientific content of the first redaction, which deals with natural problems, and particularly on the extracts from Plutarch's (generally neglected) *Quaestiones Naturales*. I will try to demonstrate how

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Byzantine philosopher and the first great humanist". See also Sleeman, "Psellus", 58: "There were no literary Dark Ages in Byzantium. Psellus and his admirer, Anna Comnena, prove that".

[21] Westerink, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, 2–3; Sleeman, "Psellus", 57; Zervos, *Psellos*, 127.

[22] Westerink, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, 6.

[23] Westerink, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, 2.

ancient science (as an integral part of philosophy) was approached in the Byzantine era. More specifically, we ask to what extent a collection on the *Causes of Natural Phenomena* by a Middle-Platonic influenced the *Omnifarious Study* of a medieval Neoplatonic, and what, if any, the pitfalls were.

Paragraphs 92–107 of the first redaction of Psellus's *De omnifaria doctrina* originate from Plutarch's *Quaestiones Naturales*.[24] However, although we recognize much of Plutarch's own wording in these paragraphs, they do not contain the original Plutarchean text. From Table 2, we may conclude that Psellus was especially interested in *quaestiones* concerning salinity (and things related to it). Apparently, he thus tried to extract from Plutarch's work a set of coherent passages, probably in order to improve the coherent reading of his own work.

With regard to the general adaptation of the original text from *Quaestiones Naturales*, Sandbach remarks that "[i]t was Psellus's habit either to adhere closely, even while abbreviating, to the phrasing of his original, or to rewrite completely … But Psellus was accustomed to omit what he found unnecessary or unintelligible, and would change the order of words at sentence-ends to obtain an accentual rhythm".[25] And Harrison notes that "Psellus's Greek condensations have deprived one more of Plutarch's style than of his thought".[26] In the comparative study of the two texts, I will distinguish between structural adaptations and adaptations with regard to the content and meaning of the text. First, though, I concentrate on purely textual matters; they are of minor importance to Psellus' historical context, but the redactional peculiarities thus uncovered are informative about Psellus' approach and they offer some editorial enhancements with regard to the text of Plutarch (see especially my discussion of the contested genuineness of 170 and 188 and their place in *Quaestiones Naturales*). Afterwards, but still in line with these adaptations, I will explore the influence of the Orthodox establishment on the redaction of *De omnifaria doctrina* and try to identify what Psellus ultimately set out to achieve with this work.

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[24] In manuscripts Hieros. gr. 108 and Laur. VII 35, these paragraphs are explicitly headed αἰτίαι φυσικαί; See Westerink, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, 3. The same Greek title was defended for *Qu. nat.* on the basis of the reading in the manuscripts and the entry in the Lamprias catalogue (nr. 218) by L. Pearson & F.H. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia in Sixteen Volumes*, XI (Cambridge 1965) 133.

[25] Sandbach, *Moralia*, 143–144.

[26] G.W.M. Harrison, "Tipping his Hand: Plutarch's Preferences in the *Quaestiones Naturales*", in L. Van der Stockt (ed.), *Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in Plutarch. Acta of the IVth International congress of the International Plutarch society, Leuven, July 3–6, 1996* (Leuven 2000) 237–250 at 247, n. 28.

3. *Editorial Enhancement*

The manuscript used by Psellus seems to have been closely related to the three primary manuscripts modern scholars commonly rely on to edit the text of *Quaestiones Naturales*. Sandbach remarks that: "there is no evidence incompatible with his having used U while still complete."[27] On some occasions, Psellus offers variant readings, some of which may be regarded as corrections to the manuscript tradition of *Quaestiones Naturales*.[28] On other occasions, Psellus seems to have misread Plutarch,[29] so that some of the variant readings he offers are demonstrably inferior to the manuscript tradition.[30] Unfortunately Psellus' text is not useful in solving the lacunary end of *Qu. nat.* 28.[31]

There are reasons to assume that the text of *Quaestiones Naturales* did not come down to us in its full extent.[32] This incompleteness is apparent

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[27] Sandbach, *Moralia*, 146. Those manuscripts are Urbinas 97 (U); Palatinus Heidelbergensis 283 (H); Ambrosianus 859 (α). U dating from the 10th or 11th century, H from the 11th or 12th century, and α from 1295 AD (written for Maximus Planudes). Sandbach remarks "that since Westerink has established the original text of *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, readings found only in manuscripts of later redactions can in any case be disregarded by editors of Plutarch".

[28] For instance, in *De om. doct.* 169.4 Psellus writes ἑαυτήν, which is better than αὐτήν, because there is reflexivity on the sea itself flowing back to its former position (ἀνατρεχούσης εἰς ἑαυτήν). There is, in any case, no other antecedent for αὐτήν than θάλατταν itself. In 172.6 ὁδηγεῖται is better than ὁδηγεῖ τε, because the context requires a passive diathesis and because (according to Sandbach, *Moralia*, 145) the combination τε καὶ is unusual in Plutarch. In 172.9 καὶ is not omitted (See manuscripts α and U^3, as opposed to manuscripts U^1 and H); see also 173.6. In 179.5 Psellus reads ὀξύν (acid) instead of ὀξίνην (sour wine). The same word (ὀξύν) occurs only once in the text by Psellus, but twice in that by Plutarch (*Qu. nat.* 5, 913B). Whereas manuscript U^1 and Psellus read ὀξύν, manuscripts U^2 and α twice read ὀξίνην. Plutarch is investigating the origin of flavors and clearly ὀξύν is more generic than ὀξίνην. Only in the first instance is ὀξίνην plausible (viz. φέρει … τὸν ὀξίνην ὁ βότρυς, "the grape produces sour wine"), and certainly not in the second (pomegranates and apples do not produce sour wine, but a sour flavor). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that (at least in the second instance) Plutarch wrote ὀξύν, as Psellus did.

[29] In *De om. doct.* 173.7, πίπτουσα is a misreading of πέττουσα. In 185.1 the pronunciation of τευθίς is indeed τεφθίς. In 172.6 Sandbach prefers the impersonal verb βροντᾷ where Psellus writes the noun βρονταί with an ellipse of εἰσί (the meaning is unchanged). In 173.1, εὐαρδέστερα is a misreading of εὐαλδέστερα ("productive of better growth") but it also occurs in the manuscript tradition of *Qu. nat.* (U and α).

[30] In *De om. doct.* 172.9 τῇ γονῇ (U^1, H, Psellus) is inferior to τῇ γῇ (α, U^3), which is synonymous with the following καὶ τοῖς τόποις. In 180.7 the prefix in διαλειχόντων ("lick through"?) is strange. In 183.6, Psellus writes διαχέει rather than the contracted form, for no apparent reason.

[31] Psellus simply repeats himself and says nothing about the bear's teeth. See especially the conjectures by Hubert and Sandbach; See also L. Senzasono, *Plutarco. Cause dei Fenomeni Naturali. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento* (Naples 2006) 228, n. 160.

[32] The manuscript tradition of *Qu. nat.* is, in any case, very lacunary, as appears from

especially from the case of *Qu. nat.* 40 and 41 (170, 188). Sandbach believes Psellus read *Qu. nat.* 40 and 41 in manuscript U, at a moment when it contained more questions and was less dilapidated.[33] Westerink was the first to propose that these questions are genuine, or that they at least have a genuine Plutarchean core, so that Sandbach annexed them in his Loeb edition. They are not recorded, however, in the Teubner editions by Hubert[34] or in the *Corpus Plutarchi Moralium* edition by Senzasono, and are printed in a smaller font by Sandbach, on account of their not being *entirely* authentic. Senzasono remains sceptical about the status of *De om. doct.* 170 and 188 in respect of *Causes of Natural Phenomena*,[35] and therefore ignores them, even though he does not substantiate his position.[36] However, there are indications that Sandbach was right to include them and to treat them as (more or less) genuine.

Especially the fact that Psellus' first redaction was arranged according to its sources convinced Westerink that these paragraphs were the possible remains of two genuine Plutarchean *Causes of Natural Phenomena*.[37] Like most problems collected in that collection, the scientific content of *Qu. nat.* 40–41 is very similar to that in *Table Talks*. Plutarch himself often

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the Latin translation of Gybertus Longolius (*c.* 1507–1543). The first thirty-one problems are translated by him into Latin from the Aldine edition, and eight further problems appear in Latin translation, but without the Greek. Longolius remarks that he extracted these eight problems from a manuscript in Milan (*ex Mediolanensi sunt exemplari*), which could not be retraced by Xylander or any subsequent scholar. There can be no doubt that each of these problems is authentic, but we do not know whether the lost manuscript from Milan (or indeed other lost manuscripts) perhaps contained more *quaestiones* (for that matter, we do not even know whether the Milan manuscript also contained *Qu. nat.* 1–31). See Sandbach, *Moralia*, 142. It should be noted that the number of problems contained in *Qu. nat.* (41) is lower than that in *Qu. conv.* (95) or in similar collections, such as *Qu. Rom.* (113) and *Qu. Graec.* (59). *Qu. Plat.* (10), for its part, has fewer problems but is more extensive in content.

[33] Sandbach, *Moralia*, 146.

[34] C. Hubert – M. Pohlenz & H. Drexler, *Plutarchus. Moralia*, 5.3 (Leipzig 1960).

[35] Senzasono, *Plutarco*, 50–51: "Può darsi che i problemi trattati in *De omn. Doctr.*, 170 Westerink … e 188 Westerink traggano origine da problemi della parte perduta della *Quaest. nat.* plutarchee, ma questo non autorizza a farne due capitoli successivi a quelli tradotti dal Longolio (XL e XLI) come fa il Sandbach nella sua edizione … è arbitrario porre di fatto le due *Questioni* di Psello sullo stesso piano dei capp. XXXII–XXXIX della traduzione del Longolio, che costituiscono una testimonianza imperfetta, ma nel complesso certa del pensiero di Plutarco in quella parte perduta dell'opuscolo".

[36] Senzasono, *Plutarco*, 51: "probabilità, non certezza".

[37] Some doubt does however linger; See Westerink, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, 3 and s.v. "Stellingen II": "De Omnifaria Doctrina §§170 en 188 zijn vermoedelijk uittreksels uit het verloren gedeelte van Plutarchus' *Aetia physica*" (§§170 and 188 are probably extracts from the lost part of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Naturales*).

inserts similar material in both works,[38] but there is also one instance where Psellus silently incorporates a passage from a specific *Quaestio convivalis* in his treatment of a *Quaestio Naturalis* (which we do not encounter there in the original Plutarchean text).[39] There are some important parallel passages between the two problems at issue and *Table Talks*. In *De om. doct.* 170.9–10 (= *Qu. nat.* 40), we find a reference to *Qu. conv.* 685C on lightning and salt making corpses immune to decay, and in 188.7–8 (= *Qu. nat.* 41) we encounter a passage that is similar to *Qu. conv.* 684D, but where the exact opposite is claimed: Plutarch's grandfather remarks that rue has a sweeter and milder taste if it is grown under or beside a fig tree, whereas Psellus writes that rue, when planted under a fig tree, becomes more pungent. On one other occasion (187.5), Psellus quite unequivocally rejects Plutarch's thesis in favor of its diametric opposite. So why did he refrain from formulating his criticism explicitly in this instance? One plausible explanation is that Psellus got the natural phenomenon right but got confused about the flavors, but it is also possible, of course, that Plutarch himself was responsible for the mix up.

If *Qu. nat.* 40–41 have a genuine Plutarchean content, the original text must have undergone some doctoring by Psellus, but there are also obvious Plutarchean trademarks to be found. *Qu. nat.* 40 is atypically introduced by the phrase τίς ἡ αἰτία and no interrogative particle is used to introduce the *causa*. This technique is rather exceptional and occurs on just one other occasion in *Causes of Natural Phenomena* (viz. in *Qu. nat.* 29, 919A). As regards Plutarch's typical stylistic tropes,[40] the use of synonyms coupled by the particle καί is attested in both *Qu. nat.* 40 and 41 (e.g. ἐξατμίζει καὶ

[38] See Sandbach, *Moralia*, 138. I argue elsewhere that *Qu. nat.* is *not* an unpublished Plutarchean ὑπόμνημα (See Plu., *De tranq. an.* 464F) for the redaction of *Quaestiones convivales* but an autonomous work, probably composed on the basis of more "fundamental" notes; See M. Meeusen, "Matching in Mind the Sea Beast's Complexion. On the Pragmatics of Plutarch's Hypomnemata and Scientific Innovation: the Case of *Q.N.* 19 (916BF)", *Philologus* 156 (2012) 234–259. See also Senzasono, *Plutarco*, 45–47 (*pace* K. Ziegler, "Plutarchos von Chaironeia", *RE* (1951) XXI, 857; Sandbach, *Moralia*, 135). On Plutarch's notebooks see L. Van der Stockt, "A Plutarchan Hypomnema on Self-Love", *AJPh* 120 (1999) 575–599. See also Ziegler, *Plutarchos*, 787, who notes that the concept of ὑπομνήματα "ja nicht nur Auszüge aus Quellenschriften, sondern mindestens in gleichem Maße auch Niederschriften eigener Gedankengange bezeichnet".

[39] In *De om. doct.* 180.10–12, the quotation from Hom., *Il.* 9.214 (πάσσε δ' ἁλὸς θείοιο, "he sprinkled with salt divine") and the subsequent explanation are taken from *Qu. conv.* 684F–685 BC (see n. 65).

[40] See Sandbach, *Moralia*, 134–136.

ἀναξηραίνει and εὐωδέστατον καὶ ὀσφραντικώτατον).[41] Hiatus, on the other hand, is not avoided (e.g. κεραυνοῦ ἐμπεσόντος and πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ἡδεῖαν).[42] Sandbach[43] also recognizes a Plutarchean ring in both questions, though this feature is not unknown to Psellus either.

4. *Textual Adaptations and Improvement of the Readability*

As regards Psellus' structural adaptations to the *Quaestiones Naturales* (in general), there are different levels to consider. At the basic level of word order, there is little of importance to note. Psellus often inverts the original word order, sometimes to obtain an accentual rhythm (as marked by Sandbach[44]) and even rhyme,[45] but this technique is applied unsystematically and not only in sentence-endings.[46]

However, the adaptations at a higher structural level, in respect of the specific arrangement of the *quaestiones* and *causae* (which format is inherent to the Ps.-Aristotelian genre of Προβλήματα φυσικά), are informative about Psellus' approach. In general, the compositional scheme of the problems in *Quaestiones Naturales* runs as follows:[47]

Quaestio: Διὰ τί; (a)

Causa 1: Πότερον ὅτι;
Causa 2: Ἢ ὅτι / τοῦτο;
Causa 3: Ἢ μᾶλλον ὅτι; (b)
Etc.

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[41] With regard to Plutarch's use of coupled synonyms, see for example T.S. Schmidt, *Plutarque et les barbares* (Leuven 1999) 15–26 and S.T. Teodorsson, "Plutarch's Use of Synonyms: a Typical Feature of his Style", in Van der Stockt, *Rhetorical Theory*, 511–518.

[42] With regard to hiatus in Plutarch, see J. Schellens, *De hiatu in Plutarchi Moralibus* (Bonnae 1864).

[43] Sandbach, *Moralia*, 144.

[44] Ibid.

[45] See, for example, *De om. doct.* 180.6–7: Psellus obtains a rhyme by changing γέγονεν in γίνεται, by inversing the word order with ὑπὸ δριμύτητος, and by placing λεπτύνεται at the end of the sentence. See also 169.6: διαύγειαν ταῖς ὄψεσι διδόντες καὶ καταφάνειαν instead of ταῖς ὄψεσι διαύγειαν καὶ καταφάνειαν διδόντες.

[46] The examples are legion: Psellus, *De om. doct.* 169.4: τὸ ἔλαιον τῇ πυκνότητι instead of τῇ πυκνότητι τὸ ἔλαιον; 173.6: ἔαρος δὲ μάλιστα instead of μάλιστα δ' ἔαρος; 179.2: ὀκτὼ τῷ γένει ὄντων τῶν χυμῶν instead of τῶν χυμῶν, ὀκτὼ τῷ γένει ὄντων, 3: ὁρῶμεν γινόμενον instead of γεννώμενον ὁρῶμεν, 7: θάλασσα διηθουμένη διὰ φυτοῦ τὸ ἁλμυρὸν ἀποβάλλει instead of ὕδωρ ἡθημένον διὰ φυτοῦ, διηθουμένη δὲ καὶ θάλαττα τὸ ἁλμυρὸν ἀποβάλλει; 183.5: τὸν καρπόν ἐν τῷ στάχυι instead of ἐν τῷ στάχυι τὸν καρπόν.

[47] I borrow the scheme from Harrison, *Tipping his Hand*, 238.

I can be brief about the *quaestiones*, since almost all were copied verbatim (as Psellus did in the case of the headings of Ps.-Plutarch's *Placita*). The only notable exceptions are the phrase διὰ τί, which has been merged into a single word (διατί), and the occasional change of word order (172). Sometimes Psellus adds minor specifications to Plutarch (182: ἡ παλάμη τῆς χειρός instead of τὴν χεῖρα) or abridges him by omitting some words (185; 186; 189). The extensive *quaestio* of *Qu. nat.* 5 is trimmed and concisely retitled περὶ χυμῶν (179), and most of the content of the original question is relocated in Psellus' argument (cf. also 184). With regard to the changing color of the octopus, Psellus, in 181, adds αἷς ἂν πέτραις προσομιλήσῃ ("with the rock on which it sits"), because Plutarch himself not only intends to explain the change of the color but also its assimilation into the surroundings.[48]

In respect of the *causae*, Psellus simplifies the fixed structural scheme by omitting its interrogative aspect. The word πότερον, which in Plutarch initiates a compound question, is absent in Psellus and the interrogative particle ᾗ is changed into a purely disjunctive particle ἤ ("or"). A new *causa* may be introduced by means of imperatives, as in εἰπὲ καὶ ἄλλην αἰτίαν (168.6; 11) or πρόσθες καὶ ἄλλην αἰτίαν (172.10–11), which certainly makes the reading more engaging (will the reader perhaps be questioned on these matters?).

Another identifiable compositional principle is the relocation of *causae* in order to render the (sometimes chaotic) development of Plutarch's explanation more systematic and easier to read.[49] In 169, for instance, Plutarch's own explanation[50] (viz. that oil, owing to its density, pushes aside the sea

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[48] See *Qu. nat.* 19, 916B (second *causa*): ἢ τοῦτο πρὸς τὴν μεταβολὴν πιθανῶς λέλεκται πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐξομοίωσιν οὐχ ἱκανῶς; "Or is this a plausible explanation for the change of the color, but not a sufficient one for its assimilation?"

[49] Sometimes, several *causae* are merged and compiled in one short *causa*. In *De om. doct.* 168.11–13, for instance, the fatty content (λιπαρότης) of seawater is directly connected by Psellus to the inability of trees to bear fruit (οὐκ ἐᾷ ταῦτα καρπογονεῖν) when seawater enters their pores, whereas Plutarch merely reports that bushes and plants that grow in the Indian Ocean region bear no fruit and grow close to the shoreline, where they are nourished by the silt deposit from rivers. An extreme example of this kind of merger is the epitome of *Qu. nat.* 15 and 16 in one problem (186).

[50] The fact that this is Plutarch's own view can be inferred from the phrase σκόπει δὴ (or δὲ) μὴ, which (sometimes with the variant ὅρα) is generally believed to introduce Plutarch's personal opinion; see for example *Qu. conv.* 639B; *Qu. nat.* 3, 912E; *Qu. Plat.* 1000D, 1004B, 1011D. See H.J. Rose, *The Roman Questions of Plutarch* (Oxford 1928) 49; Sandbach, *Moralia*, 175; J. Opsomer, "Ζητήματα: Structure et Argumentation dans les *Quaestiones Platonicae*", in J.A. Fernández Delgado & F. Pordomingo Pardo (eds), *Estudios sobre Plutarco: aspectos formales* (Madrid 1996) 71–83 at 83; J. König, "Fragmentation and Coherence in Plutarch's *Sympotic*

and causes visibility to the sight) is placed at the beginning of the problem, and the opening *causa* of the original text (viz. that wind slipping over the smooth surface of oil on seawater makes no impression) comes second, but the explicit reference to Aristotle is omitted.[51] The relocation can be explained on the basis of Plutarch's *quaestio*, which first inquires into the reason of clearness (καταφάνεια) and only then considers the calm (γαλήνη) produced when the sea is sprinkled with oil. In his own aetiology, Plutarch alternatively draws attention to the external and the internal aspects of the phenomenon, as he does on other occasions, too.[52]

In general, Psellus abridges Plutarch's text to maintain an average number of lines per problem (*c.* 10 to 15 lines). The last *causae* are usually abridged quite drastically (e.g. 173) or altered into a weak version that is inferior to Plutarch's text (e.g. 179). Sometimes the opposite occurs: Psellus then extends his exposition in order to reach the average number of lines, for instance by repeating the question and part of the explanation (e.g. 183.8–12), or by drawing a general conclusion that, in fact, has little or no bearing on the problem at hand (e.g. 187, 189). Psellus sometimes thoroughly rewrites[53] sections he finds unintelligible or abridges what he deems too lengthy.[54] In so doing, he often uses the same Plutarchean terminology,[55] but the result is sometimes illogical and confusing.

In order to improve the readability of his own version, Psellus often adapts the content and meaning of Plutarch's text. At a basic level, he

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Questions", in J. König & T. Whitmarsh (eds), *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge 2007) 43–68 at 52.

[51] See also Plu., *De prim. frig.* 950B.

[52] See G. Roskam, "Two *Quaestiones Socraticae* in Plutarch", in J. Candau Morón et al. (eds), *Plutarco transmisor. Actas del X simposio internacional de la sociedad española de Plutarquistas* (Seville 2011) 424–425.

[53] In *De om. doct.* 182, for instance, Psellus rewrites *Qu. nat.* 22. Only the phrase ὡς ποδὶ αὐτῷ χρῆται βαδίζουσα καὶ ὡς χερσὶν ἀντιλαμβανομένη ("the bear uses its paws as feet when walking and as hands when grasping") can be found in the original Plutarchean text.

[54] See Psellus, *De om. doct.* 169.7–10: in *Qu. nat.* 12 Plutarch explains the phenomenon where oil smoothens the surface of seawater and renders it transparent by arguing that the density of the oil restores the regularity and transparency of the air that is present in seawater. Psellus rewrites this *causa* completely, but he agrees that oil on the surface is meant (externally) as well as (the surface of) the seawater itself (internally): ἢ ὅτι τὸ ἔλαιον ὁμαλώτατον καὶ λιπαρώτατον ὄν, ἐπιχεόμενον τῇ θαλάσσῃ διασκίδνησι τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ ζοφερὸν ἀέρα καὶ λαμπρότατον ἀπεργάζεται, γαλήνην δὲ ἐμποιεῖ ἐπιπλέον ἄνωθεν καὶ οὐκ ἐῶν κάτωθεν αὐτὴν ἀναβράττεσθαι. See also Sandbach, *Moralia*, 179, n. c: "Psellus appears to have found the sentence obscure, for he rewrites it completely."

[55] See Psellus, *De om. doct.* 181: Psellus paraphrases most of the very lengthy *Qu. nat.* 19; the words ἀπόρροιαι and συμμέτρως are borrowed from Plutarch.

alters the original words and sometimes uses more transparent or general terminology.[56] Additions or elaborations are often incorporated to clarify Plutarch's text[57] and its sometimes obscure[58] or technical terminology.[59] Some of these elaborations "he may as well have invented … as found … in his text of Plutarch".[60]

But Psellus deletes as often as he adds. He omits not just words or phrases,[61] but also entire *causae* that he deems to be implausible or less relevant to the rest of the exposition, or that would otherwise make the problem exceed the average number of lines. In this sense, Psellus' adaptations are arguably inspired by considerations of some sort of textual aesthetics, where each problem receives an explanation of the same length. *Faits divers* are systematically ignored.[62] As mentioned before, these adaptations sometimes result in an illogical argumentation. In 179.6–7, for instance, an entire *causa* is reduced to its essence: ὁ δὲ ἁλμυρὸς χυμὸς ἀπ' οὐδενὸς γίνεται ("the salty flavor is generated from nothing"). At the beginning of the first *causa* of *Qu. nat.* 5 Plutarch indeed writes: οὐκ ἔστιν ἁλμυροῦ γένεσις ("salt is not generated"). Psellus is not concerned with the rest of this *causa* or with the one that follows, but jumps directly to the third one, where we find the Platonic explanation that a flavor is water that has been strained through a plant, and that seawater loses its saltiness when filtered, as mentioned at the end

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[56] Psellus, *De om. doct.* 169.5: γίνονται instead of ἀπολείπονται; 180.4: διδόασι τοῖς βοσκήμασι instead of λείχειν ἐθίζουσι τὰ βοσκήματα; 183.2: βροχὴν πλείστην δεχόμενος instead of ὑόμενος; 189.5: χοῖρος for σῦς. From a grammatical perspective, Psellus' tendency to analyze the cases by using prepositions is inherent to the Byzantine Greek idiom: See, for example, 168.4: διὰ τὸ παχὺ instead of ὑπὸ πάχους; 172.7–8: διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀέρος ἀνάμιξιν instead of τῇ ἀναμίξει τοῦ ἀέρος; 181.12: πρὸς τὸ λευκὸν instead of τοῖς λευκοῖς.

[57] See Psellus, *De om. doct.* 168.9: Psellus adds ἐξικμάζον ταύτας καὶ ἀναξηραῖνον to clarify why salt is a safeguard against putrefaction. In 180.8–9 ἐντεῦθεν καθίστανται is added.

[58] See Psellus, *De om. doct.* 179.5: τὸν γλυκὺν is rendered more precise by adding τὸ μέλι.

[59] See Psellus, *De om. doct.* 169.5: πόροι τινὲς καὶ κενὰ διαλείμματα instead of simply πόροι.

[60] Sandbach, *Moralia*, 149, n. c. See Psellus, *De om. doct.* 168.3: Psellus adds ταχέως εἰς τὸ στέλεχος καὶ τοὺς ἀκρέμονας ("rise quickly into the stem and twigs") perhaps to elaborate on the viscosity of seawater. See *Qu. nat.* 2, 912B: ἀναπέμπεται ταχέως εἰς τὸ φυτόν.

[61] See, for example, Psellus, *De om. doct.* 173.7: omission of the obvious supplement διὰ τὴν ἀνωμαλίαν τῆς κράσεως ("owing to the uneven temperature"). In 169.8, the phrase ἢ μάλιστα μὲν ἔαρος βροντᾷ καὶ ἀστράπτει διὰ τὴν εἰρημένην αἰτίαν ("or do thunder and lightning occur particularly in the spring for the reason given") is omitted in order to avoid repetition.

[62] See, for example, Psellus, *De om. doct.* 169: the introduction of the second *causa* of *Qu. nat.* 12 (where it is said that divers blow out oil in the depths of the sea to obtain illumination) is omitted; 173.2: omission of ἃ δὴ καὶ ἀστραπαῖα καλοῦσι ("which is also called lightning-water").

of 179.[63] The result is a *non sequitur*,[64] and Psellus does not copy the quotation *nominatim*.

5. *Pressure of the Orthodox Establishment*

Especially Psellus' tendency to omit the names of the ancient, Hellenic philosophers that Plutarch refers to is conspicuous.[65] He deletes the references to Plato, Anaxagoras, Democritus and Aristotle in 168 of *Qu. nat.* 1, for instance; and in 172, he leaves out the name of Laetus,[66] even though his explanation is retained; and in that same paragraph, the quotation is no longer attributed to Aristotle as in Plutarch. There are several possible explanations for these omissions. Perhaps Psellus wanted to pocket the intellectual honor himself, or perhaps he deemed this information to be useless to his reader, who may have been unfamiliar with such ancient thinkers. Equally plausible, though, is the hypothesis that Psellus had to be careful not to show too much explicit interest in Hellenic, and especially Platonic, philosophy, which was after all considered pagan and even heretic, because it deviated from Orthodox doctrine.

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[63] Psellus, *De om. doct.* 179.10–12: ἅτε γὰρ παχύτατον ὂν τὸ ἁλμυρὸν οὐ δύναται ἀπὸ τῶν ῥιζῶν εἰς τοὺς κλάδους μετεωρίζεσθαι, εἰ μὴ σὺν τῇ ἁλμυρότητι ἀποβάλλει καὶ τὴν βαρύτητα. "Because salt water is very thick it cannot ascend from the roots into the twigs if it does not remove with the saltiness also the heaviness".

[64] It is illogical to argue on the one hand that salt is absent in plants because it is filtered out in the roots, and, on the other, that ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν φυτῶν τὸ ἁλμυρὸν ὕδωρ καὶ θαλάττιον ἀλλοιούμενον τὴν μὲν ἁλμυρότητα ἀποτίθεται, ἑτέραν δὲ μεταλαμβάνει ποιότητα ("in *every* plant salty seawater becomes altered by casting off its saltiness and by receiving another quality").

[65] This is also the case with the names of poets and physicians. In *De om. doct.* 189, for instance, the reference to Homer (*Od.* 19.446) is omitted, although in the Plutarchean text it has important argumentative value (illustrating that the eyes of boars are hot so that their tears melt and become sweet). In 180 the recommendation of the physician Apollonius about correct nourishment is omitted in its entirety, probably because it is obscure (See Sandbach, *Moralia*, 159, n. b). In the same 180.10–12 we do find a line from Hom., *Il.* 9.214, clearly quoted via *Qu. conv.* 684F–685C: τὸ δὲ ἅλας θεῖον ὁ ποιητὴς εἴρηκεν ἐν οἷς λέγει 'πάσσε δ' ἁλὸς θείοιο', διότι θείαν κέκτηται δύναμιν, τὰ νεκρὰ τῶν σωμάτων καὶ εὔσηπτα ἄσηπτα ἐργαζόμενον ("The poet has said that salt is divine with the phrase 'he sprinkled with salt divine'; therefore it has obtained a divine power, rendering corpses and the parts of the body which are more ready to putrefy immune to decay").

[66] Probably Ofellius Laetus, a Platonic philosopher and contemporary of Plutarch. See J. Opsomer, "Ofellius Laetus (ca. 50–95 CE)", in K.P. Turquand & G.L. Irby-Massie (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists: the Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs* (New York 2008) 586–587 (with further references).

Sometimes Psellus does explicitly cite Plato (187, 189) or Aristotle (170),[67] but these quotations are not taken from *Quaestiones Naturales* and remain rather general, without any concrete argumentative value. They come in handy, though, in carefully drawing a line between Orthodox dogma and Hellenic ideas, and in emphasizing Psellus' loyalty to the former. In 65.4–6, Psellus is quite negative about Plato, Aristotle and Hellenic philosophy in general: αὕτη δὲ ἡ δόξα ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἀρέσκει, ἔστι γὰρ καὶ Ἑλληνικὴ καὶ ἀδιανόητος, κἂν εἰ μυρίοι Πλάτωνες καὶ Ἀριστοτέλεις τοῦτο πεφλυαρήκασι, "that opinion does not satisfy me, because it is Hellenic and ill-considered; even if countless Platos or Aristotles were to talk the same nonsense".

Nonetheless, a certain ambivalence remains vis-à-vis the authority of Plato, Aristotle and the like. In 87.5–12, Psellus contradicts Plutarch's theory, by arguing that the vine quite easily receives and returns to itself a substance that has left it (i.e. wine made from its own grapes).[68] He says that "the plant applies itself by nature to its juice and can automatically better endure the contraction (of the passages) thereby caused, even though it has no senses, impulses, or imagination (by which it could observe that it is its own juice)".[69] How this natural process comes to be is hard to tell, because, as Psellus continues, "truly most of the investigations of physicists are difficult and hard to make out, and one must reject the depth of the diagnosis, but receive what is given (i.e. the explanation) if it is plausible".[70] The opposition of τὸ βάθος (which is synonymous with the inconceivable depth of the explanation of a natural phenomenon) and τὸ διδόμενον (which is synonymous with the plausible explanation, though not necessarily the true

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[67] For an overview of other Hellenic (and Christian) philosophers cited, see the index of Westerink's edition of *De omnifaria doctrina*.

[68] Psellus, *De om. doct*. 187.5–6: ῥᾷον δὲ ἡ ἄμπελος δέχεται τὸ ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀπιὸν εἰς αὐτὴν ἐπανιόν. Plutarch argues, on the contrary, that it is even more unnatural for the vine to receive back and have returned to itself a substance that has left it. It is regrettable that Psellus contradicts Plutarch on this matter, because his text cannot, therefore, help us further in solving the lacuna in the original Plutarchean text, which breaks off at this point (See Sandbach, *Moralia*, 145–146). It is not inconceivable that the manuscript Psellus used was also lacunary (or illegible) at this point.

[69] See Psellus, *De om. doct*. 187.6–8: εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἀναίσθητον τὸ φυτὸν καὶ οὔτε ὁρμῇ οὔτε φαντασίᾳ διοικούμενον, ἀλλὰ φύσει πρὸς τὸν οἰκεῖον χυμὸν τρεπομένη παρ' αὐτοῦ μᾶλλον ὑπομένει τὴν πύκνωσιν. According to 34.10–11 and 35.5–6 the lack of these qualities (senses, impulses, imagination) implies that plants have no soul. That is why Psellus adds the adjunct "by nature" (φύσει) here.

[70] Psellus, *De om. doct*. 187.8–11: εἰσὶ μὲν οὖν ὡς ἀληθῶς τὰ πλείω τῶν φυσιολογουμένων δύσφραστα καὶ δυσείκαστα, καὶ δεῖ τὸ μὲν βάθος ἀπογινώσκειν τῆς διαγνώσεως, δέχεσθαι δὲ τὸ διδόμενον ἂν ἔχῃ τὸ πιθανόν.

or exact one) is related to the nominatim quotation of Plato, *Tim*. 29CD that follows: "I who speak, just as you who listen, (we) are human beings."[71] With this reference, Platonic epistemology is given an Orthodox touch: in comparison to God, we human beings have only restricted intellectual abilities and we must therefore accept the plausible explanation as a gift and be content with it.[72] The passage in the *Timaeus* runs as follows:

> In our treatment of a great host of matters regarding the Gods and the generation of the Universe we prove unable to give accounts that are always in all respects self-consistent and perfectly exact with regard to gods and the generation of the universe … so that it becomes us to accept the likely account of these matters and forbear to search beyond it.[73]

In his rejection of Plutarch's theory and his outcry for a religiously inspired sceptical stance in natural science, Psellus explicitly follows Platonic epistemology and, at the same time, cleverly shows himself a devout Christian, who does not claim to possess the intellectual ability to fathom God's plan in nature.[74] He *a priori* subordinates the *sensibilia* of science to the *intellegibilia* of philosophy. Psellus is sceptical about the degree of certainty that can be attained in physics,[75] but implicitly also about the efforts that have already

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[71] Psellus, *De om. doct*. 187.11–12: τοῦτο καὶ Πλάτων ἐν Τιμαίῳ βοᾷ, ὡς 'ἐγὼ τὲ ὁ λέγων ὑμεῖς τὲ οἱ ἀκούοντες φύσιν ἀνθρωπίνην ἔχομεν'.

[72] Psellus, *Chron*. 6.40.1–5: ἔστι τις καὶ ὑπὲρ τὴν ἀπόδειξιν σοφία ἣν μόνος εἶδεν ὁ σωφρόνως ἐνθουσιάζων νοῦς, "There is a wisdom that lies beyond proof which only a wisely inspired mind can grasp".

[73] Pl., *Tim*. 29C–D: πολλὰ πολλῶν πέρι, θεῶν καὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως, μὴ δυνατοὶ γιγνώμεθα πάντῃ πάντως αὐτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς ὁμολογουμένους λόγους καὶ ἀπηκριβωμένους ἀποδοῦναι … ὥστε περὶ τούτων τὸν εἰκότα μῦθον ἀποδεχομένους πρέπει τούτου μηδὲν ἔτι πέρα ζητεῖν. Translation by W.R.M. Lamb, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, IX (Cambridge 1925) ad loc.

[74] Very interesting with regard to God's divine epistemology is *De om. doct*. 17, where Psellus asks how it can be that God knows the changing things while he himself is unchangeable (πῶς οἶδε θεὸς τὰ μεταβαλλόμενα πράγματα;). The dogmatic answer (17.2–3) is: οὐχ ὡς ἔχει τὰ πράγματα γινώσκει ὁ θεὸς ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ὡς ἔστιν αὐτὸς κατ' οὐσίαν, "God knows the things not in the same way as they are, but as he himself is *in essence*". In other words: God knows the essence of things.

[75] This degree is commensurate with the exactness of the explanation; See, for example, Psellus, *De om. doct*. 169.11–12: εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλαι πολλαὶ περὶ τούτου αἰτίαι, ἀλλ' αἵ γε εἰρημέναι τῶν ἄλλων εἰσὶν ἀκριβέστεραι, "there are also many other explanations for it, but those mentioned are more exact than others". Plausibility is also related to authority; See, 170.11–12: Ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ὁ φιλόσοφος ἀποδέχεται καὶ οἱ κρείττους τῶν φυσικῶν, "the philosopher Aristotle approves this explanation, and so do the better scientists". In accordance with Platonic epistemology, Psellus *a priori* attributes lower value to empirical data; Psellus, *De om. doct*. 57.2–3: φύσις ἐστὶ δύναμις ὀφθαλμοῖς μὲν ἀθέατος, νῷ δὲ θεωρητή, "nature is an invisible power, but contemplatable by the mind"; 195.10–11: ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ … ἀτιμάζει τὴν αἴσθησιν ὡς ἀπάτης μεστήν, "the logical (part of the) soul despises sense-perception because it is full of

been undertaken by earlier physicists such as Plutarch. Plutarch, too, adopts a careful position in matters of physics, but whereas he primarily founds his "probabilism" on Platonic epistemology,[76] an Orthodox Christian bias prevails in Psellus.

There are in fact several degrees of plausibility: one explanation may be more plausible and have more verisimilitude than another. Psellus' attitude towards plausibility in physics is revealed in 189.8–12:

> Absolutely nothing is without a cause, even if much escapes our understanding. One must not always follow the *truer* explanations, but also content oneself with the more plausible reasons, because Plato too strongly recommends this in the dialogue *Phaedo*, not only taking on the irrefutable explanation, but also those which are difficult to counter.[77]

The passage in *Phaedo* runs as follows:

> It is either impossible or very difficult to acquire clear knowledge about these matters in this life. And yet he is a weakling who does not test in every way what is said about them and persevere until he is worn out by studying them on every side. For he must do one of two things; either he must learn or discover the truth about these matters, or if that is impossible, he must take whatever human doctrine is best and hardest to disprove.[78]

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deceit"; 197.12–13: νοῦν ἡγεμόνα ποιητέον τῆς ἔνδον ζωῆς ἀντὶ τῆς αἰσθήσεως, "mind must be made the ruler of inner life, as opposed to sense-perception".

[76] The literature on this topic is vast. See, for example, P. Donini, "Lo scetticismo accademico. Aristotele e l'unità della traduzione platonica secondo Plutarco", in G. Cambiano (ed.), *Storiografia e dossografia nella filosofia antica* (Turin 1986) 203–226 at 209–212. Plutarch's general εὐλάβεια (caution) should not be mistaken for radical scepticism. See P. Donini, "I fondamenti della fisica e la teoria delle cause in Plutarco", in I. Gallo (ed.), *Plutarco e le scienze. Atti del IV Convegno plutarcheo, Genova-Bocca di magra, 22–25 aprile 1991* (Genoa 1992) 99–120 at 104: "La medesima fermezza nel mantenere le spiegazioni fisiche entro l'ambito dell'*eikos* e del *pithanon* si riscontra poi in tutta quanta l'opera di Plutarco: in particolare, in quella che offre la più ricca esemplificazione della tratazzione di problemi pertinenti al mondo naturale, le *Questioni conviviali*". See especially *De prim. frig.* 955C, where Plutarch leaves open the possibility of a suspension of judgement (ἐποχή). See, for example, G. Boys-Stones, "Plutarch on the Probable Principle of Cold: Epistemology and the *De Primo Frigido*", *CQ* 47 (1997) 227–238.

[77] Psellus, *De om. doct.* 189.8–12: οὐδὲν γὰρ τῶν πάντων ἀναίτιον, εἰ καὶ πολλὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν διαφεύγει κατάληψιν. δεῖ δὲ μὴ αεὶ τὰς ἀληθεστέρας διώκειν τῶν αἰτιῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς πιθανωτέραις ἀρκεῖσθαι, ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτο Πλάτων παρακελεύεται ἐν τῷ διαλόγῳ τῷ Φαίδωνι, οὐ τὰ ἀνέλεγκτα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ δυσεξέλεγκτα προσδεχόμενος.

[78] Pl., *Phd.* 85C–D: ἢ ἀδύνατον εἶναι ἢ παγχάλεπόν τι, τὸ μέντοι αὖ τὰ λεγόμενα περὶ αὐτῶν μὴ οὐχὶ παντὶ τρόπῳ ἐλέγχειν καὶ μὴ προαφίστασθαι πρὶν ἂν πανταχῇ σκοπῶν ἀπείπῃ τις, πάνυ μαλθακοῦ εἶναι ἀνδρός· δεῖν γὰρ περὶ αὐτὰ ἕν γέ τι τούτων διαπράξασθαι, ἢ μαθεῖν ὅπῃ ἔχει ἢ εὑρεῖν ἤ, εἰ ταῦτα ἀδύνατον, τὸν γοῦν βέλτιστον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων λόγων λαβόντα καὶ δυσεξελεγκτότατον. Translation by H.N. Fowler, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, I (Cambridge 1966) ad loc.

Psellus obviously did not consider himself a weakling, but he realized that the final and ultimate answer is known only to God and, in a sense, *is* God.[79] The nucleus of this belief is also expressed by Plato (albeit less vigorously). The words δυσεξέλεγκτον, πιθανόν and ἀνθρώπινον establish an epistemological sequence, as do ἀνέλεγκτον and ἀληθές. The latter is completed by the addition of θεῖον.[80] According to these epistemological sequences, a human being cannot fathom the ultimately true explanation of natural phenomena with the best and most waterproof argument he can conceive of. In the end, only God knows what is going on in his Creation, of which he is the cornerstone, and he alone knows the absolute truth and, so to say, τὰς ἀληθεστάτας τῶν αἰτιῶν.

In the conclusion of 185 (cf. *Qu. nat.* 18), where it is reported that cephalopods foretell the coming of a storm to seafarers by leaping out of the sea or by clinging to the rocks, Psellus makes a remark that manifestly reveals his intentions with *De omnifaria doctrina* and explains his interest in natural phenomena in general: "God has scattered prophetic powers among animals thanks to which salvation follows and sorrow retreats".[81] The word that "leaps out" of this excerpt and does not (very often) appear in Plutarch's *Causes of Natural Phenomena*, is God. In his collection of *Causes of Natural Phenomena* Plutarch tends to focus in particular on natural phenomena and their explanations;[82] only very exceptionally does he invoke the super-

[79] See esp. the opening 'credo' in Psellus, *De om. doct.* 1.2–3: πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα πατέρα τὴν πάντων ἀρχὴν καὶ αἰτίαν, οὐκ ἔκ τινος γεννηθέντα, ἀναίτιον δὲ καὶ ἀγέννητον μόνον ὑπάρχοντα, "we believe in one father, the beginning and the cause of everything, not produced by anything, nor caused or born: the one supreme ruler". See also *De om. doct.* 83.2–3: ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων πρώτη μὲν καὶ ὑπεράρχιος ὁ θεός, μετὰ δὲ θεὸν πολλαὶ ἀρχαὶ τῶν φυσικῶν πραγμάτων εἰσί, "God is the first and the supreme beginning of all things and he is followed by many physical principles".

[80] Psellus, *De om. doct.* 31.10, where ἀληθέστερος is synonymous with θειότερος. This strange comparative reoccurs for instance in 172.4, where the explanation offered by Aristotle is considered ἀληθέστερον.

[81] Psellus, *De om. doct.* 185.11–12: ἐγκατέσπειρε γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ζώοις δυνάμεις προγνωστικάς, δι' ὧν τὰ σωτήρια διώκουσα καὶ τὰ λυπηρὰ διαφεύγουσι. See also 57.9: φύσις, ἥτις οἷον ὄργανόν ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ, "nature is a kind of instrument of God"; and according to 19.3 there is πρόνοια in the cosmos.

[82] In addition, in *Qu. nat.* there is an entire absence of any moralizing discourse as well. In *Qu. nat.* 36, for instance, Plutarch investigates the natural phenomenon whereby bees are more likely to sting (*citius pungunt*) people who have just committed an immoral sexual act (*stuprum*). Comparing this passage with *Coni. praec.* 144D, one notices that his interest in *Qu. nat.* 36 is focused exclusively on the natural *causa* of the phenomenon, and that the terminology remains referential, viz. without any moral implication. I will discuss this parallel in greater detail elsewhere.

natural influence of one divinity as the ultimate explanation for a natural phenomenon (but of course never as the "savior" of our poor souls), not because doing so makes for "bad science", but because he, in a certain sense, draws a line between physical and metaphysical (mythical, religious) causation, and (at least) in a treatise that deals with physical aetiologies—as the title suggests—he logically opts for the former explanatory framework.[83] Psellus, for obvious reasons, had no problem combining the two frameworks, because, irrespective of his interest in Hellenic philosophy and science, he remained a religious man (note, however, that Plutarch was a Delphic priest himself, but that this is perhaps not immediately clear from the mainly "scientific" discourse in *Causes of Natural Phenomena*). Moreover, Psellus would most likely have run into serious problems had he not shown a certain pious inclination towards the Orthodox establishment and, more importantly still, towards his dedicatee, the Emperor.

6. *Conclusion*

Although in the Byzantine empire of the eleventh century there was strong aversion to Ἑλληνική φιλοσοφία, we see that "a huge sea change came with Psellos … Here was, for the first time in ages, a philosopher who took the trouble to give the subject a more substantial role in intellectual life and who actively re-established contact with the exegetical tradition of the

[83] In *Qu. nat*., this borderline is not rigid but osmotic, and, in other treatises (including the scientific ones), Plutarch combines the two modes of causation explicitly. In *De fac*. 940F–945D, for instance, the scientific discussion ends with an eschatological myth explaining the purpose of the moon in the universe in terms of its importance for the life-cycle of souls. In *Qu. nat*., on the other hand, the 'scientific' mode of explanation obviously largely eclipses the 'mythical' mode, but some exceptions can nonetheless be found, for instance, in *Qu. nat*. 23, 917F, where the mythical rape of Korè by Pluto around Mount Etna is recorded. In *Qu. nat*. 36, in an excerpt taken from Theocritus, it is asserted that Aphrodite and Anchises were punished by bees for their *adulterium*. Also a quotation from Pindar is added, where it is told that the mythological figure of Rhoecus was stung by a bee because of his *perfidia* (fr. 252 Snell). Note that Plutarch does not *a priori* prefer one mode of explanation to the other, as Senzasono, *Plutarco*, 215, n. 135 tends to argue ("probabilmente non aveva [la narrazione leggendaria] per Plutarco lo stesso peso delle osservazioni naturalistiche"). See especially *Per*. 6, where Plutarch, with regard to the interpretations by the seer Lampron and the natural philosopher Anaxagoras of the miraculous phenomenon of the one-horned ram whose head was brought to Pericles, states: ἐκώλυε δ' οὐδέν, οἶμαι, καὶ τὸν φυσικὸν ἐπιτυγχάνειν καὶ τὸν μάντιν, τοῦ μὲν τὴν αἰτίαν, τοῦ δὲ τὸ τέλος καλῶς ἐκλαμβάνοντος ("in my opinion, though, there was nothing to prevent both of them from being successful—the natural philosopher by correctly interpreting the cause and the seer the purpose").

late Antique and early Byzantine centuries … His larger intention was to revive a moribund part of the Hellenic heritage; it was a solo mission"[84] and Psellus was right, therefore, when he said that "Philosophy had already expired when I came upon it … but all by myself I brought it back to life".[85] However, the time was not quite ripe yet to openly ally oneself with Ἑλληνικὴ φιλοσοφία, in view of the, metaphorically speaking, polluting effect of the salt water that sprouts from its sources.[86]

In the epilogue (201) of *De omnifaria doctrina*, Psellus addresses the emperor and concludes that "some views are drawn from our own holy vessels, but numerous others from the salty, Hellenic waters".[87] He adds that he tried to purge the latter and to harmonize them with "our own true doctrines" (ἡμετέρας ἀληθινὰς δόξας), but, as a medieval Neoplatonic, Psellus was aware that, despite his efforts, Ἑλληνική φιλοσοφία is salted into the explanation, making it impossible for him to remove all of its tang. Psellus closes his treatise with the following ambivalent metaphor, which brilliantly presents his position on Hellenic philosophy and saves him from the pitfalls of heresy, while nonetheless committing it: εἰδείης τὰ μὲν τῶν ἡμετέρων γραφῶν ῥόδα ἄντικρυς ὄντα, τὰ δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων σὺν τῷ ἄνθει καὶ τὸ φαρμακῶδες ἐγκεκρυμμένον ἔχοντα.[88]

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[84] Duffy, "Psellos", 154–155. Michael Glycas (12th century), for instance, often simply copies from Psellus' text in his *Annales* (he calls him σοφώτατος on p. 341 Bekker). See for example p. 26 Bekker (= Psellus, *De om. doct.* 188) and pp. 66–67 Bekker (= Psellus, *De om. doct.* 185).

[85] Psellus, *Chron.* 6.37: ἐκπνεύσασαν τὴν σοφίαν καταλαβών … αὐτὸς ἀνεζωπύρησα οἴκοθεν. It should be noted, though, that Psellus' predecessors Photius and Arethas—however different their contributions may be—had also made considerable efforts in this regard; See Duffy, "Psellos", 144.

[86] The same metaphor is used in *Ep. ad Xiph.* 28.

[87] Psellus, *De om. doct.* 201.3–5: τὰ μὲν [νοήματα] ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἱερῶν κρατήρων ἀρυσάμενος συναγήοχα, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁλμυρῶν ὑδάτων, φημὶ δὴ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν.

[88] "You should know that the roses of Christian scripture are quite genuine, but those of others also have a poisonous/healing element in the flower." See N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London 1983) 158. The pun is, of course, on the word φαρμακῶδες, which can imply both 'poisonous' and 'healing'.

Table 1: first redaction of *De omnifaria doctrina.*

1st red.[89]	Source	Content
1–25	Ps.-Plutarch, *Placita*	Physics
26–48	Ps.-Plutarch, *Placita*	Astronomy
49–75	Olympiodorus, *In met. Ar.*; Aristotle, *Met.*; Heliodorus, *Aeth.*; Dionys. Hal., *Antiq. Rom.*	Meteorology
76–91	Proclus, *In Tim.*; unknown Platonic source	Platonic psychology
92–107	**Plutarch**, ***Quaestiones Naturales***	**Physics**
108–121	Proclus, *De decem dub.*, *De mali subs.*, *Inst. Th.*; Porphyry, *Sent.*	Platonic metaphysics
122–130	Ps.-Plutarch, *Placita*	Physiology
131–137	Plutarch, *Quaestiones Convivales* (books five and six)	Physics and physiology

Table 2: *Quaestiones Naturales* in *De omnifaria doctrina.*

1st red.	*Qu. nat.*	Westerink	Content
92	1	168	Seawater
93	2	172	Rainwater
94	4	173	Rainwater
95	12	169	Seawater
96	5	179	Salt
97	3	180	Salt
98	19	181	Sea life
99	22	182	Sweetness
100	14	183	Rainwater
101	**40**	170	Seawater
102	28	184	Bear
103	18	185	Sea life
104	15–16	186	Wetness
105	31	187	Wine
106	**41**	188	Sweetness
107	20	189	Tears

[89] See Westerink, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, 2–3 for the corresponding numbers in his edition.

II

PLUTARCH AND RELIGION

IACCHUS IN PLUTARCH*

Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal

1. *Is Iacchus Dionysus?*

Iacchus' figure has raised a great discussion and confusion between ancient and modern scholars. Iacchus is often considered a name of Dionysus, with whom he is identified in art and literature from early times.[1] However, it is a very debated question whether Iacchus is originally an independent deity who emerged in Eleusinian circles and was assimilated later to Dionysus,[2] or on the contrary, he is a mere *epiclesis* of this god.[3]

In the Eleusinian Mysteries Iacchus accompanied Demeter and Kore, and his image presided over the procession that carried Iacchus from Athens to Eleusis on 20th Boedromion—corresponding to 28th or 29th September. In fact, the term Ἴακχος has been associated ever since ancient times with the ritual exclamation ἴακχε that the initiates cried during the procession.[4] In

* This work is part of the Research Project Consolider C "Cosmogony and Eschatology in Eastern Mediterranean Religions: similarities, differences, processes", financed by MEC (HUM 2006–09403).

[1] S., *Ant.* 1151, *Fr.* 959 Radt; *AP* 9.82, 11.59, 11.64; *PMG* 879, 1027d; Ath. 15.678a; E., *Ba.* 725; Luc., *Salt.* 39; Lucr. 4.1160; Cat. 64. 251; Verg., *Aen.* 6.15, see O. Kern, "Iacchus", *RE* IX 1 (Sttutgart 1914) cols. 614–622 (619–622); K. Clinton, *Myth and Cult: The Iconography of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Stockholm 1992) 65 n. 16.

[2] See F. Höfer, "Iacchus", in W.H.R. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Hildesheim 1965 [Leipzig 1890–1894]) 1–11; L.R. Farnell, *The Cult of the Greek States*, III (Oxford 1907) 148; P. Foucart, *Les mystères d'Eleusis* (Paris 1914) 325; Kern, "Iacchus", cols. 619–622; G.E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton 1961) 238, 318. Other scholars argue that the growing importance of Dionysus in Athens led to his assimilation with the Eleusinian Iacchus, who was originally an independent deity: H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos. Histoire du culte de Bacchus* (Paris 1978 [1951]) 436–439; K. Kerényi, *Eleusis. Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter* (London 1967 [Zürich 1962]) 156–158.

[3] See F. Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Berlin–New York 1974) 51–66; N. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1974) 320; A.M. Bowie, *Aristophanes. Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge 1993) 232–233; I. Lada-Richards, *Initiating Dionysus. Ritual and Theater in Aristophanes' Frogs* (Oxford 1999) 59, n. 60. A fine *status quaestionis* in Clinton, *Myth*, 64–71.

[4] See below, pp. 127–128.

this field he is always called Iacchus but never Dionysus. Plutarch mentions Iacchus in five passages of the *Lives*, almost all of them linked with the Eleusinian Mysteries, and specially to the procession.[5] This paper examines these testimonies and their possible sources in order to clarify whether the Chaeronean author equates Iacchus with Dionysus, or he considers him to be an independent divinity.

2. *The Mystery Iacchus*

In *Themistocles*' life, Plutarch compares the roar and the light that invade the Thriasian plain during the confrontation between Greeks and Persians in the Battle of Salamis, with the shouting caused by the crowd conducting the mystic Iacchus in procession to Eleusis.[6] Plutarch echoes a famous Herodotean passage, in which Dicaeus, an Athenian exile who had become important among the Medes, and his guest Demaratus heard a sound in the Thriasian plain. The sound was similar to the ritual exclamation, the μυστικὸς ἴακχος, cried by the initiates expressing their joy when they go in procession to Eleusis.[7] Dicaeus interprets the sound as a divine voice—because the plain is then completely deserted—a cry helping the Athenians and their allies in the battle.[8]

Both texts show remarkable similarities but also some interesting differences. For example, Herodotus and Plutarch use the same expression, τὸν μυστικὸν Ἴακχον. But while the historian seems to describe a sound, φωνήν, Plutarch probably refers to the image of the god taken in procession, as

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[5] Plu., *Them*. 15.1, *Cam*. 19.10, *Alc*. 34.4; *Arist*. 27.4; *Phoc*. 28.2–3. Only *Arist*. 27 mentions a temple of Iacchus in Athens, without apparent relationship with the mysteries, but linked to the practice of dream interpretation.

[6] Plu., *Them*. 15.1, see B. Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives. Themistocles and Camillus, Aristides and Cato Major, Cimon and Lucullus*, 2 (Cambridge 1959) 42–43; R. Flacelière & E. Chambry, *Vies. Solon-Publicola-Thémistocle-Camille* (Paris 1968) 119, 223; J.L. Marr, *Plutarch. Life of Themistocles* (Warminster 1998) 109–110; A. Pérez Jiménez, *Plutarco. Vidas paralelas II. Solón-Publícola. Temístocles-Camilo, Pericles-Fabio Máximo* (Madrid 2008 [1996]) 277–278.

[7] Hdt. 8.65; Arrianus, *An*. 2.16. See Farnell, *Cult*, 146–151; Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 8–10; Graf, *Eleusis*, 54–59; idem, "Iacchus", *Brill's New Pauly* (Leiden–Boston 2005) cols. 662–663; Clinton, *Myth*, 65–66, n. 14 considers ἴακχε a cry originally common to other cults, especially the Dionysiac ones, so that the name Ἴακχος became a designation of Dionysus.

[8] Plutarch sets the prodigy and the battle on the same day. From Herodotus' text can be inferred that the miracle happens on an unspecified date, but in any case days before the confrontation with the Persians. According to Plutarch himself (*Cam*. 19.10), the battle took place on 20th Boedromion, see Flacelière & Chambry, *Vies. Thémistocle*, 223; Marr, *Plutarch*, 109.

suggested by the verb ἐξάγω.[9] The current editions reflect the difference by using capital and lowercase letters. For Plutarch Iacchus is undoubtedly a deity worshipped in the mysteries. Herodotus' text, however, lends itself to ambiguous interpretations. At the end of the passage Herodotus explains that the cry ἰακχάζουσι is uttered at the festival that Athenians observe every year for the Mother and the Maiden,[10] but he does not mention the god Iacchus anymore, neither here nor in any other text.

It has been suggested that for Herodotus Iacchus was not yet a god, but simply a ritual exclamation that had subsequently given rise to the deity.[11] Ἴακχος seems to derive from the exclamation ἴακχε, derived in turn from ἰαχή, ἰάχω ("cry, to cry").[12] In Herodotus' text, the expression μυστικὸς ἴακχος makes reference to the ritual cry, but it does not prevent Iacchus from being already regarded as a god at this time. In fact, several inscriptions show his presence possibly as early as the 6th BC at Berezan and Olbia.[13] Sophocles, contemporary of Herodotus, considers Iacchus a deity identified with Dionysus, and also Euripides, who knows other meanings of the term ἴακχος, as we shall see shortly.[14] Most of the later references to the episode narrated by Herodotus present Iacchus as a divinity helping the Greeks in the battle.[15] It seems therefore that Herodotus has wished to give

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[9] Hdt. 8.65.9–10: καί οἱ φαίνεσθαι τὴν φωνὴν εἶναι τὸν μυστικὸν ἴακχον; Plu., *Them*. 15.1: ὡς ἀνθρώπων ὁμοῦ πολλῶν τὸν μυστικὸν ἐξαγόντων Ἴακχον.

[10] Hdt. 8.65.21, see Kern, "Iacchus", col. 614; H.S. Versnel, "Ἴακχος. Some Remarks Suggested by an Unpublished Lekythos in the Villa Giulia", *Talanta* 4 (1972) 23–38 (23).

[11] U. von Wilamovitz, *Euripides. Hippolytos* (Berlin 1891) 28; Höfer, "Iacchus", 10; Foucart, *Les mystères*, 110–111; Kern, "Iacchus", cols. 613–614.

[12] H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1960) *s.v.* Ἴακχος; P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots* (Paris 1968–1980 [rev.ed. 2009]) s.v. Ἴακχος. See also U. von Wilamovitz, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (Darmstadt ^{3}1959 [Berlin 1931–1932]) 158–159; M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* I (Munich ^{3}1967) 664; Graf, *Eleusis*, 54–55 n. 20; Pérez Jiménez, *Vidas*, 365 n. 171.

[13] Berezan (6th c. BC): *SEG* 32 (1982) nr. 746; Olbia (5th c. BC): *IGDOlb*. nr. 79 (*OF* 565); Olbia (4th c. BC): *SEG* 30 (1980) nr. 914. The interpretation "Iacchus" has been proposed in a zigzag graffito engraved on the back of a bone plate from Olbia (5th c. BC): *IGDOlb*. 94b, see M.L. West, "The Orphics of Olbia", *ZPE* 45 (1982) 17–29 (23); A. Bottini, *Archeologia della salvezza. L'escatologia greca nelle testimonianze archeologiche* (Milan 1992) 153–154; A. Bernabé, "Las láminas de Olbia", in A. Bernabé & F. Casadesús (eds), *Orfeo y la tradición órfica: un reencuentro* (Madrid 2008) 537–546 (540 and n. 13).

[14] As theonym, for example, in S., *Ant*. 1152, fr. 959 Radt., E., *Ba*. 725; for the meaning of "song" in Euripides, see below p. 128.

[15] X., *Smp*. 8.40; Polyaen. 3.11.2; Aristodem., *FGrH* 104 F 1.8; Aristid., *Or*. 19.258 Jebb (I 418–419 Dindorf) and *Or*. 46.214 Jebb (II 282 Dindorf) and schol. ad loc. p. 648 Dindorf. Aeschylus does not mention, however, Iacchus' intervention when he emphasizes in *Persians* (345–354) the importance of the gods in the Athenian victory against Xerxes' army. Lib., *Decl*. 9.44 speaks of the help of daimones coming from Eleusis, but without naming Iacchus.

priority to the cultic cry over other details of Iacchus' procession that was surely held already in his time.[16]

Other authors also stress the importance of the shouting in this moment. For example, Aristodemus says that the crowd uttered the mystic Iacchus, and he uses the same expression as Herodotus and Plutarch—written with a capital letter in the edition.[17] A scholion to a passage in Aelius Aristides insists that it was Iacchus himself who made a beneficial sound that initiates heard and the uninitiated felt.[18]

In these texts ἴακχος is a kind of cry or ritual exclamation uttered by the initiates. The term can also have the meaning of song or hymn of worship, not necessarily associated with the god. In Euripides' play *The Trojans Women* ἴακχος is a threnody; in *The Cyclops*, it is Iacchus' song in honor of Aphrodite, and in a fragment of *Palamedes*, it refers to the sound of Dionysiac tympani.[19] But the most significant testimony is Aristophanes' *Frogs*, in which the chorus invokes Iacchus and intones a song in his honor.[20] I cannot deal here with the debated question whether it refers to the central role played by this god at Eleusis,[21] or, on the contrary, it is also a possible allusion to Bacchic cults and ephebic rites of passage.[22] In any case, Eleusinian echos are noted and acknowledged by supporters of both hypotheses.

Back to Plutarch, in *Themistocles and Camillus* the expression μυστικὸς ἴακχος refers to the image taken in procession,[23] as indicated by the verbs which it complements. A passage of Clement of Alexandria that I will discuss later confirms this meaning.[24] Nevertheless, the allusions to the roar

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[16] On Herodotus' silence about Iacchus as divinity, see Graf, *Eleusis*, 58.

[17] Aristodem., *FGrH* 104 F 1. 8 βοώντων τὸν μυστικὸν Ἴακχον.

[18] Schol. Aristid. 213.18 and 214.1, 648 Dindorf, see also schol. Aristid. p. 185 Dindorf. Him. 69.7 speaks of making to resound Iacchus, πολὺν ἠχήσει τὸν ἴακχον, see Graf, *Eleusis*, 57–58.

[19] E., *Tr*. 1230, *Cyc*. 68–71, *fr*. 586. 4 Kannicht, see Graf, *Eleusis*, 56 n. 25.

[20] Ar., *Ra*. 316–320, 324–336, 340–353, 394–413.

[21] So Clinton, *Myth*, 66–67; R. Martin & H. Metzger, *La religión griega* (Madrid 1977) 197–199; K. Dover, *Aristophanes. Frogs* (Oxford 1993) 40, 61–62; idem, "The Chorus of Initiates in Aristophanes' *Frogs*", in E. Degani et al. (eds), *Aristophanes. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* (Vandoeuvres–Genève 1993) 173–201 (176–177, 182–184).

[22] Graf, *Eleusis*, 55–58; Lada-Richards, *Initiating Dionysus*, 50 and n. 18, 59 n. 60. See also L. Radermacher, *Aristophanes' Frösche* (Vienna 1967) 184–186, 197–199; Richardson, *Homeric Hymn*, 320; Bowie, *Aristophanes*, 229–233.

[23] Plu., *Them*. 15.1, *Cam*. 19.10. E. Suárez de la Torre: "Dioniso y el dionisismo en Plutarco", in J.G. Montes – M. Sánchez & R.J. Gallé (eds), *Plutarco, Dioniso y el vino* (Madrid 1999) 29–55 (49).

[24] Clem.Al., *Prot*. 4.62.3, see below, p. 130.

and shouting invading the Thriasian plain indicate that Plutarch was well aware of the sense of the expression in the original text that he paraphrases. The references in *Alcibiades*[25] to the dances performed by the initiates during the procession suggest also that the shouting quoted in *Themistocles* is nothing other than the hymns or exclamation in honor of Iacchus.

Neither Herodotus nor the other authors who cite the episode of Iacchus' prodigy mention the Eleusinian procession, although there may be implicit allusions to it in the references to the dust of some of them. Plutarch, however, seems interested in highlighting the procession and specially the day that it is celebrated and the rituals and dances that are performed.

3. *The Procession to Eleusis*

3.1. *On Boedromion 19th/20th*

Four of the five passages of Plutarch quoting Iacchus refer to the procession to Eleusis. In *Camillus* and *Phocion*, Plutarch says that Iacchus was carried from Athens to Eleusis on 20th of Boedromion.[26] A late inscription shows that the procession started actually on the 19th, so that the initiates likely left Athens that day and came to Eleusis in the early morning of the 20th.[27] On the morning of the 19th priests and priestesses took the sacred objects from the Eleusinion, where they had been sheltered since their arrival in Athens.[28] They probably followed the Panathenaic Way, traversed the agora and came to a temple, in which the crowd of the initiates joined them in order to set out to Eleusis.[29]

This temple has been identified with a Demeter's sanctuary mentioned by Pausanias, in which the images of the Eleusinian goddesses and Iacchus himself were kept. It was probably located near the Pompeion, at the

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[25] Plu., *Alc*. 34.4.

[26] Plu., *Cam*. 19.10, see Perrin, *Lives. Themistocles*, 140–141; Flacelière & Chambry, *Vies. Thémistocle*, 174–175, 235–236; Pérez Jiménez, *Vidas*, 365. Plu., *Phoc*. 28.2–3, see R. Flacelière & E. Chambry, *Vies. Phocion-Caton Le Jeune* (Paris 1976) 43–44, 159; B. Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives. Sertorius and Eumenes Phocion and Cato the Younger* (Cambridge 1989) 207–208; C. Alcalde Martín, *Plutarco. Vida de Foción* (Madrid 2001). See also schol. Ar., *Ra*. 324.

[27] *IG* II^2 1078, 18–22 (ca. 220 CE), see K. Clinton, *Eleusis. The Inscription on Stone. Documents of the Sanctuary of the two Goddesses and Public Documents of the Deme* (Athens 2005) nr. 638. On the procession, see Foucart, *Les mystères*, 324–327; Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 252–258; Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 60–66. On the date, see also S. Dow, "Athenian Decrees from 216 to 212 BC", *HSCPh* 48 (1937) 105–126 (113–115). Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 62.

[28] *IG* II^2 81, 10, see Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 62.

[29] *IG* II^2 1078, 14–15, see Graf, *Eleusis*, 49. See also Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 253.

entrance to the city by the Dipylon Gate.[30] Perhaps it is the same sanctuary that Plutarch mentions in *Aristides* as "the so-called Iaccheion", near which a grandson of Aristides made his own living by means of a sort of dream-interpreting tablet.[31] Plutarch attributes this information to Demetrius of Phalerum, but in fact only Plutarch himself and another late author, Alciphron, who probably is paraphrasing him, speak of a Iacchus' temple.[32]

Let us continue with the procession. The retinue was led by the statue of Iacchus, the real protagonist of the festival. In a cultic calendar from late 5th c. BC, the name ἀρχηγέτης, "leader-in chief", is probably referred to Iacchus,[33] as suggested by a passage of Strabo who gives the same name to Iacchus, the genius of Demeter.[34] The lexicographers Hesychius and Photius highlight the importance of Iacchus so much so that the term designated the day when the god was carried in procession.[35] Several inscriptions from late 2nd c. BC require the Ephebes to accompany and escort Iacchus.[36] Pausanias says that his image held a torch and was the work of Praxiteles.[37] Clement of Alexandria confirms this news with an interesting specification: he talks about the "mystery Iacchus".[38] It is possible, as a text from Aristophanes suggests, that the statue was crowned with myrtle.[39] Several priestesses and a special priest known as the Ἰακχαγωγός accompanied the

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[30] Paus. 1.2.4, see Foucart, *Les mystères*, 113, 329; Wilamovitz, *Glaube*, 159; Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 253; Graf, *Eleusis*, 49 and n. 43 with bibliography (see also 55 and n. 22); A.H. Sommerstein, *Frogs* (Warminster 1996) 184.

[31] Plu., *Arist*. 27.4, Perrin, *Lives. Themistocles*, 296–297; R. Flacelière & E. Chambry, *Vies. Aristide-Caton l'Ancien. Philopoemen-Flamininus* (Paris 1969) 54, 218; J.M. Guzmán Hermida & O. Martínez García, *Plutarco. Vidas paralelas. Aristides-Catón. Filopemén-Flaminino. Pirro-Mario* (Madrid 2007) 62.

[32] Demetr. *FGrH* 228 F 45 (4th c. BC); Alciphr. 3.23 (4th c. CE). See also the news transmitted by Aelius Aristides' scholiast (schol. Aristid., 213.18, at 648 Dindorf), whereby Iacchus left his sanctuary in order to ally himself with the Greeks in the Battle of Salamis.

[33] F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques. Supplément* (Paris 1962) nr. 10. 67, at 28–30.

[34] Str. 10.3.10.

[35] Hsch. and Phot. s.v. Ἴακχος, see Graf, *Eleusis*, 44.

[36] *IG* II^2 1006.9; 1008.8; 1011.8; 1028.9, see Graf, *Eleusis*, 44, n. 24.

[37] Paus. 1.2.4. Later (1.37.4) the Periegeta tells that Iacchus' image was dedicated by Mnesitheus. We suppose he is referring to the same image, but he does not specify, neither says where the statue is or the material that was made. Cic., *Ver*. 4.135 mentions a marble statue of Iacchus in Athens.

[38] Clem.Al., *Prot*. 4.62.3.

[39] Ar., *Ra*. 324–336. On the use of myrtle crowns at Eleusis, see Graf, *Eleusis*, 44, n. 27, with bibliography. Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 64, relates its use to the story of Dionysus rescuing her mother from Hades because he offered myrtle to the Chthonian god (see schol. Ar., *Ra*. 330).

image.[40] They were joined by the initiates and many Athenians who begun overland the way to Eleusis.

3.2. *τὰ δρώμενα on the Road*

In *Alcibiades* Plutarch tells that the vicissitudes of the Peloponnesian War forced to hold the procession by sea.[41] We have only other testimony of this exceptional circumstance in Xenophon.[42] The route change caused the suspension of sacrifices, dances and other rituals usually held on the road. Although silence about these rites was required, some aspects could be revealed, maybe with propaganda purposes.[43] In fact, there is some literary and epigraphic evidence about sacrifices, dances and other rites such as the *krokosis* and the *gephyrismos*.[44]

The *krokosis* was handled by the Krokonides, a family of priests, descendants of the mythical king Krokos. They had the privilege of tying a ribbon of saffron color (κροκή) around the right and the left leg of the *mystai*.[45] *Gephyrismos* (γεφυρισμός) is the rite by which the initiates crossed the bridge over the Kephisos while common people ridiculed them with satirical ditties.[46] There are no testimonies about Iacchus' role in these rites. His presence was, however, crucial in the dances of the initiates, according to literary evidence that describes the god leading the chorus. Euripides, in the *Ion*, underlines the cosmic power of the dances that the god of "many hymns" (πολύυμνον θεόν) leads in honor of the Maiden with golden crown and her revered Mother the night 20th of Boedromion. The tragedian

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[40] This official had a place reserved in the theater: *IG* III 262; Pollux 1.35, see Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 236, 253–254.

[41] Plu., *Alc.* 34.3, see B. Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives. Alcibiades and Coriolanus, Lysander and Sulla* (Cambridge 1968) 99–100; R. Flacelière & E. Chambry, *Vies. Périclès-Fabius Maximus-Alcibiade-Coriolan* (Paris 1969) 157–158, 248; A. Pérez Jiménez & P. Ortiz, *Plutarco. Coriolano-Alcibíades. Paulo Emilio-Timoleón. Pelópidas-Marcelo* (Madrid 2006) 186.

[42] X., *Hell.* 1.4.20.

[43] See A. Bernabé, "Los misterios de Eleusis", in F. Casadesús Bordoy (ed.), *Sectes, ritus i religions del món antic* (Palma de Mallorca 2002) 133–157.

[44] It even seems that Polemon wrote a book about the ceremonies held on the sacred way, see Foucart, *Les mystères*, 331.

[45] See Foucart, *Les mystères*, 337; Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 65; Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 256 thinks that the rite would offer the initates the chance to rest; L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932) 77 says that the *krokosis* was held before leaving Athens, between 15th and 19th of Boedromion. Plu., *Phoc.* 28.5, seems to refer to the same rite. On *Krokos*, see Paus. 1.38.2.

[46] Hsch., s.v. γεφυρίς–γεφυρισταί, see Foucart, *Les mystères*, 333–335; Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 256 considers apotropaic the purpose of these rites, so that insulted people would be humbled and would not be visited by evil spirits; Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 65.

does not mention the name of Iacchus, but the Athenian audience would have no doubt of his identity.[47]

Aristophanes, in *Frogs*, speaks of songs and dances in honor of Iacchus. The scene has been considered by many scholars a transcript of the Eleusinian procession, even if Aristophanes mixes elements of several rituals, including Eleusinian ones.[48] The action takes place in Hades, but the rites held by the initiates are similar to those performed in life, just as an advance and learning of afterlife experience. The chorus invokes Iacchus and invites him to dance with their sacred *thiasoi*.[49] Some details suggest a Bacchic experience: for example, the initiates organized in *thiasoi* or the wild dance in which the god, as a Bacchant, shakes his myrtle-crowned head. A few verses later, the chorus describes how the devotees dance at night, in the light of torches, in a flowery meadow. They invite the god to lead the group.[50] Some lines later, the choryphaeus exhorts the chorus to call with its songs to Iacchus, its partner in the dance, and then, the chorus intones in honor of the god a three-stanzas-song ending with the same refrain: Ἴακχε φιλοχορευτά, συμπρόπεμπέ με, "Iacchus, lover of the dance, join in escorting me".[51] In the first stanza Iacchus is celebrated as the "inventor of this delightful festive song" and he is asked to show how he completes a long journey without fatigue, perhaps in reference to the great distance that the worshippers had to cover.[52] In the second one, there are references to the ragged clothing dressed during the procession. This allusion can be interpreted in different ways. The initiates considered sacred the clothes worn at one's initiation and they used them year after year, or the clothes were worn out by the inclemency of the travel.[53] The motif of ragged clothing

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[47] E., *Ion* 1074–1086, see Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 9. The expression πολύυμνον θεόν involves in a way the identification of Iacchus and Dionysus, since there is no evidence of hymns celebrating Iacchus—at least in 5th c. BC, except the hymn in the *Frogs*—unlike Dionysus. The terminology of the passage also reflects the Bacchic frenzy of the initiates.

[48] Ar., *Ra.* 324–336 and 394–411, see Radermacher, *Aristophanes' Frösche*, 199; Graf, *Eleusis*, 48 n. 38; Lada-Richards, *Initiating Dionysus*, 100. See also J. García López, *Aristófanes. Ranas* (Murcia 1993) 104.

[49] Ar., *Ra.* 324–336.

[50] Ar., *Ra.* 340–353.

[51] Ar., *Ra.* 394–413. Graf, *Eleusis*, 44 compares Aristophanes' vocabulary (συμπρόπεμπε) to that of the inscriptions in which the Ephebes escort Iacchus (see above, p. 130 and n. 36): *IG* II^2 1006.9 προέμεμψαν αὐτὰ (sc. τὰ ἱερά) καὶ τὸν Ἴακχον ὡσαύτως.

[52] A distance of approximately 22 km. separates Athens from Eleusis. On the long road, see also Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 252–253; Dover, *Aristophanes. Frogs*, 71.

[53] See Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 64; Dover, *Aristophanes. Frogs*, 62; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 192. Some evidence suggests that the initiates dedicated εἰς θεοῦ τινος the clothes in which they had

becomes obviously comic in Aristophanes' text.[54] The detail contrasts with the pomp and ostentation of the procession described by Plutarch in *Alcibiades*. We know that the procession was more regulated in late Hellenistic period than in classical one,[55] so Plutarch could have included contemporary features, alien to Alcibiades' times. I omit the commentary of the third stanza, because its content is not relevant for our study.

We do not have detailed information on whether the dances were held during the procession or to the entrance into Eleusis at sunset. Anyway, details such as the use of torches suggest that the celebration continued at night. In *Themistocles*, Plutarch mentions a great light flamed out from Eleusis.[56] The image probably evokes the torches carried by the initiates in imitation of Demeter's search for Kore by torchlight.[57] Other testimonies describe the faithful ones dancing and led by the god in the light of torches at night. In a chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone* Iacchus is invoked as "leader of the chorus of the stars whose breath is fire, overseer of the chants in the night".[58] The passage is a laudatory hymn to Dionysus who is celebrated with different names in several places, including Eleusis. It is therefore one of the oldest literary testimonies identifying Iacchus with Dionysus in Eleusinian cult. Another chorus of Aristophanes' *Frogs* stresses greatly the brightness of fire torches and Iacchus is invoked as "light-bringing star of our nocturnal ritual".[59] Pausanias also describes the statue of Iacchus holding a torch in its hand.[60]

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been initiated: Ar., *Plu*. 844–845 and schol. ad loc; Melanth., *FGrH* 326 F 4. Apparently the clothes were kept at Eleusis: *IG* II^2 1672. 229.

[54] Radermacher, *Aristophanes' Frösche*, 198–199, interpretes it humorously.

[55] See F. Sokolowki, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris 1969) nr. 15 (1st c. BC), see Graf, *Eleusis*, 57 and n. 37.

[56] Plu., *Them*. 15.1. Another reference to the same light can be seen in Plu., *Ages*. 24. 5.

[57] Hom., *h.Cer*. 47–48, see Flacelière & Chambry, *Vies. Thémistocle*, 223; Lada-Richards, *Initiating Dionysus*, 99 and n. 211.

[58] S., *Ant*. 1115–1152 (1146–1148: Ἰὼ πῦρ πνεόντων/ χοράγ' ἄστρων, νυχίων/ φθεγμάτων ἐπίσκοπε), see P. Vicaire, "Place et figure de Dionysos dans la tragédie de Sophocle", *REG* 1968, 351–373 (358–365); R.P. Winningtom-Ingram, *Sophocles. An Interpretation* (Cambridge 1980) 110–116; C. Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization. An Interpretacion of Sophocles* (Cambridge 1981) 201–206; A. Bierl, *Dionysos und die griechische Tragödie. Politische und "metatheatralische" Aspekte im Text* (Tübingen 1991) 127–132. J.M. Macedo: "In between Poetry and Ritual: the Hymn to Dionysus in Sophocles' *Antigone* (1115–1154)", *CQ* 61 (2011) 402–411.

[59] Ar., *Ra*. 340–353 (343: νυκτέρου τελετῆς φωσφόρος ἀστήρ), see also schol. ad loc. On the importance of fire in Eleusinian ritual, see Lada-Richards, *Initiating Dionysus*, 99 and n. 211. See also Richardson, *Homeric Hymn*, 233.

[60] Paus. 1.2.4, see above, p. 130 and n. 37. There are also many iconographic representations of Iacchus holding torches in Eleusis, see Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 54 and fig. 12a–12d and 11; 64, 79 and fig. 15; 156–159 and fig. 45a–b; 165 and fig. 52a–c.

The procession ended with the reception of Iacchus' statue into Eleusis, where the god did not have its own temple.[61] This significant detail might support the identification of Iacchus and Dionysus, a thorny question that we have dealt with in the beginning and can take up again when examining the findings.

4. *Findings*

As I initially pointed out, Iacchus is identified with Dionysus in art and literature from early times. However, it is difficult to resolve the question as to whether Iacchus has become the representative of Dionysus in Eleusinian circles or he is originally an independent deity. Iacchus has a deep Dionysiac character in most of the texts showing his function in the Eleusinian procession—the main theme of Plutarch's passage.[62] Euripides speaks of a Bacchic phenomenon the night 20th of Boedromion, Sophocles identifies Iacchus with the Dionysus of the Maenads and Aristophanes' choruses suggest also orgiastic rites during the procession. Those who defend the original individuality of Iacchus and Dionysus think that the identification appears only in literary passages, but not in cult, where both were always separate figures. This hypothesis is, however, not definitive at all, since the identification is also found in ritual texts as the paean of Philodamus Scarpheus, in which Dionysus is called Iacchus when he arrives into Eleusis.[63] That means that the explanation could be just the opposite: Dionysus is worshipped as Iacchus at Eleusis.

The preponderance of Demeter and Persephone in all Eleusinian celebrations (not only in the Mysteries) would have favored the consolidation of Iacchus' epiclesis at Eleusis, so that the loss of Dionysus' prominent role would not cast a shadow over the god's prestige. This alterity, that fits perfectly with Dionysus' nature, would explain the Dionysiac and festive atmosphere of the Eleusinian procession[64] and would also clarify why, while

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[61] *IG* II^2 847 (ca. 215–214 BC) 20–21, see Foucart, *Les mystères*, 339.

[62] Graf, *Eleusis*, 54–57.

[63] Philod. Scarph., *Coll. Alex*. p. 166, 27–36 (4th c. BC), see Foucart, *Les mystères*, 450–451; L. Käppel, *Paian. Studien zur Geschichte einer Gatung* (Berlin–New York 1992) 207–287; I. Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans. A Reading of the Fragments with a Survey of the Genre* (Oxford 2001) 131–135. Iacchus appears wearing hunter boots and an animal skin tied around his waist, in the Dionysiac way, in an Eleusinian relief from the middle of 4th BC found in Mondragone, near Naples, see Kerényi, *Eleusis*, 152–153 and fig. 43.

[64] R. Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey. Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets* (Cambridge 2004) 139 n. 79.

Dionysus could be called Iacchus out of Eleusis, an Athenian initiate in the Mysteries would not normally call Eleusinian Iacchus Dionysus.[65] Plutarch calls the god by the name he considers suitable for the Eleusinian procession's deity, that is Iacchus.

[65] Clinton, *Myth*, 66–67 n. 23.

PLUTARCH'S IDEA OF GOD IN THE RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT OF LATE ANTIQUITY

Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta

In a curious passage in *The Malice of Herodotus* Plutarch criticizes Herodotus' renowned statement that the divinity is πᾶν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες.[1] According to the standard translation and interpretation, Plutarch is reacting against a view of the divinity as "utterly envious and always ready to confound us", which Herodotus maliciously attributes to Solon. Plutarch intended to demonstrate that by using the statesman as "a mouthpiece to revile the gods" Herodotus was in fact "combining blasphemy with malice".[2] So far so good, but a surprising footnote in Pearson and Sandbach's Loeb edition strikes us as odd, as they state that Solon's attitude towards the gods, as reported by Herodotus, was not that unusual and that it "appears constantly in Greek literature".[3] Such an assertion immediately raises several questions: Did Solon ever hold such a view? Did it really appear as often in Greek literature as these scholars seem to assume? If it did, why accuse Herodotus of blasphemy and malice? and given that Pearson and Sandbach seem to exonerate Herodotus of "malice" (κακοήθεια), should the blame then be put on Plutarch?

In order to give a proper answer to these questions, in the following pages I intend to analyze Plutarch's idea of God with a view to understanding the stumbling block to his religious spirit that determined his attack on Herodotus.[4] As it will be argued, when criticizing Herodotus, Plutarch had

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[1] See Hdt. 1.32.

[2] Plu., *De Her. malig*. 857F–858A. English translation according to L. Pearson & F.H. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia in Sixteen Volumes*, XI (London–Cambridge 1965). Muñoz Gallarte, "Tyche and Determinism in the meeting of Solo and Croesus of Lydia" (forthcoming), rightly observes that A.J. Bowen's translation, *Plutarch. The Malice of Herodotus* (*de Malignitate Herodoti*) (Wiltshire 1992) 33, seems to force the meaning of βλασφημία and its historical semantic development.

[3] Pearson & Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia* XI, 29 note f. Also, Bowen, *The Malice*, 112.

[4] J.M. Dillon, "Plutarch and God: Theodicy and Cosmogony in the Thought of Plutarch", in D. Frede & A. Laks (eds), *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath* (Leiden 2002) 223–237; F.E. Brenk, "Plutarch's Middle-Platonic God:

something other than the so-called "envy of the gods" in mind. I will first review the traditional interpretation of Herodotus' τὸ θεῖον πᾶν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες, which may provide, in the first place, a plausible explanation for Plutarch's seeming inconsistency. The comparative analysis of *The Malice of Herodotus* and other Plutarchean passages will then help us clarify Plutarch's idea of god and the reasons behind his attack on Herodotus. I will then proceed to contextualize Plutarch's views, firstly, by comparing them to Platonic receptions of *Tim*. 29E and, secondly, by contrasting them with Christian and Gnostic Christian discussions that explicitly reject the possibility that God might be envious. Finally, I will draw some conclusions and offer a coherent interpretation of Plutarch's criticism.

1. *Plutarch's Idea of God and Herodotus' Malice*

As already intimated, the traditional interpretation of Plutarch's passage of *The Malice of Herodotus* seems to pose serious problems to the interpreter. According to the standard reading, Plutarch is attacking Herodotus' conception of the "envy of the gods". The problem is that this view was allegedly so widespread that it might even be seen to be distinctive of Greek culture. Thus, either Plutarch is unjustly accusing Herodotus or he is referring to something other than that considered by many interpreters.

In relation to the view of Pearson and Sandbach, even a superficial survey of the texts shows their position to be barely tenable. On the one hand, not a single passage of the preserved Solonian corpus attests to the notion of the φθόνος θεῶν, while on the other hand, as I have shown elsewhere, the analysis of the pertinent texts traditionally adduced as proof of so-called divine envy reveals clear signs of overinterpretation according to a preconceived idea of the Greek gods.[5] In fact, it is my contention that no literary or philosophical text from Homer to Aristotle provides clear evidence of a belief in the alleged "envy of the gods".

As a matter of fact, the difficulty in understanding what the Greeks actually meant by φθόνος θεῶν has to date produced four different hermeneutic approaches to the issue:[6]

About to Enter (Or Remake) the Academy", in R. Hirsch-Luipold (ed.), *Gott und Die Götter Bei Plutarch: Götterbilder—Gottesbilder—Weltbilder* (Berlin 2005) 27–49.

[5] L. Roig Lanzillotta, *La envidia en el pensamiento griego. De la época arcaica al helenismo* (Diss. Universidad Complutense; Madrid 1997).

[6] See L. Roig Lanzillotta, 'The So-called Envy of the Gods. Revisiting a Dogma of Ancient Greek Religion', in J. Dijkstra et al. (eds), *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History*

a) According to the first, oldest anthropomorphic interpretation, the φθόνος θεῶν is a normal human projection of feelings experienced in human relationships onto the gods.[7]
b) According to the second, moral-religious perspective, it is the punishment that gods inflict on those who transcend human measure, in other words, retribution which could be better described as νέμεσις or "righteous indignation".[8]
c) From an egalitarian viewpoint, in the third place, divine φθόνος is the result of the gods' intervention so that nothing may trespass the measures that regulate the *aurea mediocritas* of the Greek polis.[9]
d) The fourth approach resorts to the inveterate Mediterranean superstition of the evil eye as an explanation for φθόνος θεῶν.[10]

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of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer (Leiden 2010) 75–93. All four approaches can also be found in T. Rakoczy, *Böser Blick, Macht des Auges und Neid der Götter. Eine Untersuchung zur Kraft des Blickes in der griechischen Literatur* (Tübingen 1996) 247–260 (247–254), however, he personally applies the fourth to this issue.

[7] See, for example, K. Lehrs, "Vorstellung der Griechen über den Neid der Götter und die Überhebung", in idem, *Populäre Aufsätze* (Leipzig 1856 [1838]) 35–74; K.F. Nägelsbach, *Die homerische Theologie* (Nürnberg 1840) 33–34; K.F. Nägelsbach, *Nachhomerische Theologie des griechischen Volksglaubens bis auf Alexander* (Nürnberg 1857) 49; H.L. Dörries, *Über den Neid der Götter bei Homer* (Hameln 1870); E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihre geschichtlichen Entwicklung* II, 1 (Leipzig 1875) 20–21; L. Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt 1964 [1882]) 78–85; S. Hoekstra, "De 'wangunst der goden op het geluk, ook der rechtvaardigen', naar het grieksche volksgeloof tot op het midden van de vijfde eeuw", *Verslagen en mededelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen* 3 reeks I (1884) 7–105; M. Hoffmann, *Die ethische Terminologie bei Homer, Hesiod und den alten Elegikern und Jambographen* (Tübingen 1914); J.A.K. Thomson, *Studies in the Odyssey* (Oxford 1914) 11–13; F. Hellmann, *Herodots Kroisos-Logos* (Berlin 1934); M. Pohlenz, *Herodot. Der erste Geschichtsschreiber des Abendlandes* (Leipzig 1937); H.V. Canter, "Ill Will of the Gods in Greek and Latin Poetry", *CPh* 32 (1937) 131–143; K. Nawratil, "θεῖον ταραχῶδες", *PhW* 8 (1940) 125–126; K. Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter* (Göttingen 1961) 471–474 at 473.

[8] Lehrs, *Vorstellung*; W. Hoffmann, "Aischylos und Herodot über den φθόνος der Gottheit", *Philologus* 15 (1860) 224–266; O. Regenbogen, "Die Geschichte von Solon und Krösus", *Das humanistische Gymnasium* 41 (1930) 1–20; F. Wehrli, *Λάθε βιώσας. Studien zur ältesten Ethik bei den Griechen* (Leipzig 1931); J.L. Myres, "Homeric Equivalents of φθόνος", *CR* 51 (1937) 163–164; Pohlenz, *Herodot*; E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Los Angeles 1951); E. Fränkel, *Aeschylus Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950); J. Kroymanns, "Götterneid und Menschenwahn", *Saeculum* 21 (1970) 166–179; H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Los Angeles 1971); P. Bulman, *Phthonos in Pindar* (Buffalo 1989).

[9] See R. Hirzel, *Themis, Dike und Verwandtes* (Leipzig 1906); Hellmann, *Herodots Kroisos-Logos*; S. Ranulf, *The Jealousy of the Gods and Criminal Law at Athens* (Copenhagen 1933); Nawratil, "Θεῖον ταραχῶδες"; W. Steinlein, *Φθόνος und verwandte Begriffe in der ältesten griechischen Literatur* (Erlangen 1941); H.W. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (Cleveland 1960); Aalders, "De oud-Griekse voorstelling", 45–65; W. Nicolai, *Versuch über Herodots Geschichtsphilosophie* (Heidelberg 1986).

[10] See Nägelsbach, *Nachhomerische Theologie*, 51–52, who refers to Pindar, O. 8.55; A., *A.*

It is true that Herodotus' *Histories* have often been used to testify to the Greek belief in the so-called "envy of the gods".[11] However, there is no single passage in Herodotus that might be interpreted in this way, be it from an anthropomorphic or religious-moral perspective, be it due to an egalitarian world-view or an expression of the evil eye. For brevity's sake I confine myself to the two seminal passages which include Herodotus' conception of the θεῖον φθονερόν. The first is the above-mentioned conversation between Solon and Croesus (1.32.8–9). According to Solon, a human being should not be called "happy" until the moment of death, as in human life all is fortuitous and given that at any point fortune may turn into misfortune, the best characterization that fits mortals is rather "fortunate" (εὐτυχής).

The second passage concerns the famous story of Polycrates' ring (3.40). In it we find almost the same conceptual background, although here it is not "chance" (συμφορή) that prevents mortals from enjoying complete happiness, but a certain determinism, plausibly due to the "the wheel in human affairs" (1.207.2, κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπηίων πρηγμάτων), which *a priori* allots mortals an equal share of fortune and misfortune. In both passages we see that the issue at stake is that mortals, in contrast to the gods who enjoy complete happiness, partake in both happiness and misery. In explaining this peculiarity of human nature, it is true that both Solon and Amasis resort to divine φθονερία.

However, does it make sense to understand this as the "envy of the gods"? To begin with, there is nothing that the gods might envy in human ephemeral happiness. Note, by the way, that the *Histories* were written almost a century earlier than the *Laws*, the text in which Plato established the existence of a "descendant" kind of envy, namely the efforts by superiors to hinder inferiors from achieving status tokens that might reduce the distance that separates them from each other.[12] In addition, the text

747; Ar., *Plut*. 87; X., *Cyr*. 5.1.28; Wehrli, *Λάθε βιώσας*, 67–69; Rakoczy, *Böser Blick*, 256, on the basis of A., *A*. (470, 947); Pi., *P*. 8.71 and Hdt. 7.10.5.

[11] Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, 20–21: "Wie sich durch sein Glück oder durch seine Einbildung über das menschliche Loos erhebt, den trifft unfehlbar der Neid der Gottheit; denn eifersüchtig auf ihre Vorzüge duldet sie nicht dass ein Sterblicher ihr sich gleichstelle. Dies stimmt ganz mit dem Geist überein, der die ältere Dichtung der Griechen durchweht". See note 1 to page 21 in which he refers to Hdt. 1.32; 34; 3.40; 7.10.5.

[12] Pl., *Lg*. 730E–731B 3, that allots lowest place of social esteem to the envious individual who possesses the spiritual goods and intentionally prevents others from reaching them; in this direction *Prt*. 327A4–327B 6 puts the unenvious transmission of *arete* and justice as the

describes a divine prerogative, according to which the gods simply reserve to themselves the right to enjoy stainless happiness, refusing to share it with humans.[13] It thus seems that the term φθονερία refers to divine stinginess rather than to "envy", to a reluctant attitude or unwillingness to share with mortals something they possess that should perhaps be better translated by "avarice".[14] Could this divine stinginess explain Plutarch's criticism of Herodotus? I think it can.

For Plutarch's pious conception of the gods, Herodotus' view is most questionable, since for him the gods can only be a source of goodness for mortals. Probably based on a more rigorous philosophical definition of the divinity than that used by Herodotus, Plutarch rejects everything that may demean god's goodness. Chapter 22, 63F of *How to tell a flatterer from a friend* is clear about this:

> οἶμαι καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς εὐεργετεῖν τὰ πολλὰ λανθάνοντας, αὐτῷ τῷ χαρίζεσθαι καὶ εὖ ποιεῖν φύσιν ἔχοντας ἥδεσθαι.
>
> So … I imagine the gods confer their benefits, for the most part, without our knowledge, since it is their nature to take pleasure in the act of being gracious and doing good.[15]

Even though this passage focuses on human ignorance regarding the divine ways of favorably determining and influencing human life, both *graciousness* (χάρις) and *doing good* (εὖ ποιεῖν) come to the fore as most distinctive of the divine nature.

As a matter of fact, this is also Plutarch's position in an interesting section of his *That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible*, a text which in

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basis of a well-functioning polis. See Roig Lanzillotta, *La envidia en el pensamiento griego*, 419–424.

[13] The conceptual background of the *Histories* is still far removed from the developed psychological analysis of Plato, who first established the existence of a descendant envy, namely the protective attitude of those possessing status tokens in order to frustrate the efforts of others to achieve them with a view to frustrating their attempts at reducing the distance separating them. See previous note.

[14] Artabanus' words in the seventh book seem to confirm this interpretation. As was also the case with Solon and Amasis, for him human happiness is always mixed with a measure of misfortune (7.46.3) and therefore no mortal may be called "truly happy" (*eudaimon*). This characterization only fits the gods, who enjoy complete happiness; in fact, the sweetness of their existence highlights the misery of human life. Divine 'avarice' and not 'envy' explains the fact that while possessing complete bliss themselves, the gods allot mortals a mixed condition (7.46.4). Divine 'avarice' and the 'mixed' character of the human condition are also behind Hdt. 7.10.5, the passage that has always been interpreted as expressing the envy of the gods.

[15] Plu., *Quomod. adul.* 63F.

my view provides the clue to a proper understanding of Plutarch's criticism of Herodotus' religious views. After reviewing the wicked's fearful attitude towards God and the ignorant superstition of the major part of humanity in Chapter 21, in Chapter 22 he deals with the "better class of men, the dearest to heaven" (τὸ βέλτιστον ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεοφιλέστατον γένος). According to Plutarch:

> καθαραῖς περὶ θεοῦ δόξαις συνόντες, ὡς πάντων μὲν ἡγεμὼν ἀγαθῶν πάντων δὲ πατὴρ καλῶν ἐκεῖνός ἐστι, καὶ φαῦλον οὐθὲν ποιεῖν αὐτῷ θέμις ὥσπερ οὐδὲ πάσχειν.
>
> Their beliefs about God are pure of error: that he is our guide to all blessings, the father of everything honourable, *and that he may no more do than suffer anything base*.[16]

The more philosophical tone in this description of God expectably derives from Epicurus' *Kyriai doxai*, specifically "Cardinal Tenet" number 1, which Plutarch is implicitly trying to refute and which reads as follows:

> Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον οὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει οὔτε ἄλλῳ παρέχει· ὥστε οὔτε ὀργαῖς οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεται· ἐν ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον.
>
> What is blessed and imperishable neither suffers trouble itself nor brings it on others; hence it is not a prey (*sunechetai*) to feelings of anger or of favour, for all such feelings are found in weakness.[17]

Although Plutarch openly agrees with the first proposition, he disagrees with the second, and in order to refute it quotes Plato's definition of God as the Good *par excellence*, as found in the *Timaeus*:

> 'ἀγαθὸς γάρ ἐστιν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ περὶ οὐδενὸς ἐγγίνεται φθόνος', οὔτε φόβος οὔτ'ὀργὴ ἢ μῖσος· οὐδὲ γὰρ θερμοῦ τὸ ψύχειν ἀλλὰ ⟨τὸ⟩ θερμαίνειν, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἀγαθοῦ τὸ βλάπτειν. ὀργὴ δὲ χάριτος καὶ χόλος εὐμενείας καὶ τοῦ φιλανθρώπου καὶ φιλόφρονος τὸ δυσμενὲς καὶ ταρακτικὸν ἀπωτάτω τῇ φύσει τέτακται· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἀρετῆς καὶ δυνάμεως τὰ δ' ἀσθενείας ἐστὶ καὶ φαυλότητος.
>
> "For he is good, and in none that is good arises φθόνος about aught" or fear or anger or hatred; for it is as much the function of heat to chill instead of warm as it is of good to harm. By its nature anger is farthest removed from favor, wrath from goodwill, and from love of man and kindliness, hostility and the spreading of terror, for the one set belong to virtue and power and the other to weakness and vice.[18]

Note that Plutarch consciously adapts Plato's passage to his conceptual framework. Deprived of the introductory sentence that speculates about

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[16] Plu., *Non poss.* 1102D.
[17] Epicur., *Sent.* 1.
[18] Plu., *Non poss.* 1102D.

the cause of God's engaging in the creative process that will give rise to the cosmos (below),[19] Plato's sentence no longer speaks about God's activity, but about his nature. In addition, Plutarch amplifies Plato's passage by adding fear, anger and hatred to φθόνος, which he collectively ascribes to weakness and vice.[20] Consequently, while the *Timaeus* refers to God's inherently creative nature, Plutarch seems mainly to be concerned with denying the possibility that God might experience any negative passion whatsoever, while insisting that God is the sole source of goodwill, love of humanity and kindliness.

This means for Plutarch that Epicurus was wrong when he affirmed that the divinity "is not a prey to feelings of anger and favour" (οὐ τοίνυν 'ὀργαῖς' καὶ 'χάρισιν' οὐ συνέχεται τὸ θεῖον). Rather it belongs to God's nature "to bestow favour and lend aid", from which follows that "it is *not* his nature to be angry and do harm". Not only passions, but also hostility (τὸ δυσμενές) and the spreading of terror (τὸ ταρακτικόν) are alien to divine nature. Extrapolating this view to Plutarch's criticism in *The Malice of Herodotus*, God's φιλανθρωπία "kindliness" and φιλοφροσύνη or "friendliness" seem to rule out the second element of Herodotus' characterization of God, namely the adjective "disturbing" (ταραχῶδες).

However, what about the first element, namely τὸ φθονερόν? Does *Non posse suaviter*, which includes Plato's reference to the φθόνος of god, provide any hint as to how Plutarch interpreted this first element of Herodotus' motto? I think the clue appears in the quote from Diogenes the Cynic, which Plutarch introduces immediately after dealing with the consequences of Plato's definition of God:

> πάντα δὲ τῶν θεῶν κατὰ τὸν Διογένη, καὶ κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων, καὶ φίλοι τοῖς θεοῖς οἱ ἀγαθοί, καὶ τὸν θεοφιλῆ μή τι εὖ πράττειν ἢ θεοφιλῆ ⟨μὴ⟩ εἶναι τὸν σώφρονα καὶ δίκαιον ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν.
>
> All things belong to the gods, as Diogenes said; among friends all property is common; good men are friends of the gods, and it cannot be that one dear to the gods should fail to prosper or that the temperate and upright man should fail to be dear to the gods.[21]

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[19] Pl., *Tim*. 29D–E, Λέγωμεν δὴ δι' ἥντινα αἰτίαν γένεσιν καὶ τὸ πᾶν τόδε ὁ συνιστὰς συνέστησεν.

[20] Plutarch's ethical interest in this passage of *Non poss*. becomes even more obvious when compared with his quotation of *Tim*. 29E in *De an. procr*. 1014B and 1015B, which focus on God's creation and therefore refer to the product of creative activity as resembling divine nature as far as possible. Also his *De fato* 573C refer to God's goodness (with reference to Pl., *Tim*. 29E) as only reason of God's engaging in creation.

[21] Plu., *Non poss*. 1102F.

After describing God's goodness and attributing to him every virtue, Plutarch's adaptation of Diogenes' syllogism[22] now focuses on freely sharing or withholding one's property in relation to friends. Given that gods are friends of the righteous, Plutarch denies that they might be reluctant to give them everything they have. He consequently ascribes them the virtue of liberality or generosity in order to reject the contrary vice, to wit, an unwillingness to share, "avarice" or "stinginess".[23] This is the way he understood the φθόνος of Plato's passage and τὸ φθονερόν in Herodotus' motto.

2. *Late Antique References to Plato's* Timaeus *29E*

Up to this point my approach to Plutarch's interpretation of Herodotus' motto was confined to those passages of the author that seem to exclude any possible reference to "envy of the gods" as a background for the Herodotean view of the gods. The comparison of Plutarch's appropriation of *Tim.* 29E with some contemporary or later receptions of this passage will help us to refine the analysis. As we will now see, in spite of a wide range of interpretations, later Platonic tradition never understood this section of Plato's *Timaeus* as a reference to envy either.

Let me begin by referring to H. Dörrie's warning that it would be misleading to interpret this section of the *Timaeus* as a reference to "envy",[24] since the text seems to be much more pregnant with meaning. Obviating that which became the central issue in the Middle and Neoplatonic milieus, namely whether there was another hypostasis above God, to wit the Good, that transmitted God his goodness,[25] the sentence is concerned with at least two important aspects of the Demiurge. Firstly, it provides a cause of God's engaging in the creative process;[26] secondly, it exculpates

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[22] D.L. 6.72.

[23] So also, Plu., *Numa* 4.4.

[24] H. Dörrie, "Was ist 'spätantiker Platonismus'? Überlegungen zur Grenzziehung zwischen Platonismus und Christentum", *TheolRund* 36 (1971) 285–302 at 294: "φθόνος muß ebenso wie *invidia* als Feindseligkeit, als Mißgunst, als schädliche Gesinnung verstanden werden; hier ware 'Neid' als Übersetzung irreführend. Der Schopfer kann und will Schädliches, Boses, Wertwidriges in diese seine Schopfung nicht einfügen; es ware seinem Wesen zuwider".

[25] J. Opsomer, "Demiurges in Early Imperial Platonism", in Hirsch-Luipold, *Gott und die Götter*, 51–99, *passim*.

[26] Based on M. Baltes, "Zur Philosophie des Platonikers Attikos", in H.D. Blume & F. Mann (eds), *Platonismus und Christentum. Festschrift für H. Dörrie* (Münster 1983) 38–57 at 40, Opsomer, "Demiurges", 65, points out that Atticus already argued that the *Timaeus* called god

him from any responsibility for the possible appearance of imperfection or evil within his design, thus providing a fragment of the Platonic theodicy.[27] On the one hand, the inherent goodness of God, his generosity and the will that everything might be as similar as possible to himself starts the creative process. This in fact the way later tradition unanimously understood the *Timaeus* passage.[28] The absence of anything evil in his nature, on the other hand, means that God is able and willing to avoid everything noxious, evil or imperfect in his creation.[29] Therefore, it seems obvious that by means of the term φθόνος, Plato intended to exclude a wider range of notions than mere envy, such as a lack of generosity, stinginess and ill-will.

As already advanced, *Timaeus* 29E was a favorite text for later Platonists. Given the numerous interpretations, I shall confine myself to briefly summarizing the main, if I may call them so, *orthodox* interpretive trends and dwell a little longer upon the text's appropriation and transformation in the Christian and Gnostic-Christian milieus. As far as the former are concerned, some interpreters closely follow the *Timaeus* and focus on the cause behind God engaging in creation. Thus, for example, Seneca and Philo state that the creative activity emanates from God's goodness.[30] Others such as Nume-

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"good" and the "best of the causes" in reference to Pl., *Tim*. 29A2–3 (ὅ τε δημιουργὸς ἀγαθός); 6 (ὁ δ' ἄριστος τῶν αἰτίων); E1 (ἀγαθὸς ἦν).

[27] See Pl., *R*. 617 E, θεὸς ἀναίτιος. On the theodicy aspect see Dörrie, "Spätantike Platonismus", 294; E.B. Stevens, "Envy and Pity in Greek Philosophy", *AJPh* 69 (1948) 171–189 at 176.

[28] Ph., *De opif. mund*. 23; Plu., *De fato* 9 (572E); Alcin., *Didask*. 10 (164.36–37); Clem.Al., *Strom*. 1.86.3; S.E., *M*. 11.70; Plot., *Enn*. V 4 [7] 1.34; V 2 [11]1.9. etc.; Porph., *ap*. Procl., *In Plat. Tim*. I, 394.15; Procl., *In Plat. Tim*. I, 373.29 Diehl; D.L. 3.72; See also Gr.Naz., *Or*. 38.9 (*PG* 36.320C); Dion. Ar., *De div. nom*. 4.19 (*PG* 3.716B–C).

[29] The existence of imperfection or even of evil was sometimes explained on the ground that the measure of the good received was determined not by the donor but by the recipient. See Ph., *De opif. mund*. 23 (below note 30); Plot., *Enn*. IV 3 [27] 9.32; Aug., *Civ. Dei* 12.19, etc. see on the issue H. Dörrie & M. Baltes, *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus*, 5: *platonische Physik* (*im antiken Verständnis*) II (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt 1998) 477, note 78.

[30] Seneca, *Ep. mor*. 65.10; As for Philo, in *De opif. mund*. 5.1 he focuses exclusively on the inherent goodness that gives rise to his creative activity: "… for if anyone were desirous to investigate the *cause* on account of which this universe was created, I think that he would come to no erroneous conclusion if he were to say as one of the ancients did say: "That the Father and Creator was good; …" etc.; God confers upon chaotic matter the order it was lacking and he does that by means of the goodness that emanates from him, Philo, *De opif. mund*. 23, "And God, not being urged on by any prompter (for who else could there have been to prompt him?) but guided by his own sole will, decided that it was fitting to benefit with unlimited and abundant favours a nature which, without the divine gift, was unable itself to partake of any good thing; but he benefits it, not according to the greatness of his own graces, for they are illimitable and eternal, but according to the power of that which is benefited to receive his graces".

nius,[31] Plotinus[32] and Proclus[33] wonder whether God's goodness arises from him or rather from a superior instance, to wit, the Good, and still others simply focus on God's goodness, either to conclude that his creation is as good as possible or that nothing bad might be predicated of his nature, since he himself is the source of goodness (Alcinous).[34] Let me repeat: in this wide spectrum there is no reference to envy whatsoever.[35]

It is true, however, that the reception of Plato's sentence did develop a line of interpretation in which φθόνος, considered as "envy", played a prominent role, but not without radically changing the conceptual framework behind *Tim*. 29E. Whether or not one is permitted to extrapolate what the *Timaeus* says about the emanation of God's goodness and the creation of the cosmos to God's relationship with mortals discussed in other dialogues, this is in fact the background we find in several ancient (and modern) interpretations of *Timaeus* 29E. It goes without saying that the setting is that of the likeness to God, the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν of *Theatetus* 176A–B that became a central matter in later Platonism.[36] Once the possibility of human

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[31] Numen., fr. 21 Des Places. According to Opsomer, "Demiurges", 67–68, for Numenius "The good is the demiurge of being, as opposed to the "maker", who is then the demiurge of becoming", for which he resorted to Plato's *Republic* (509B6–7), where the good is said to produce being.

[32] Plot., *Enn*. IV 8.6; V 4.1; II 9.17.

[33] According to Proclus the One is completely transcendent and has no relation with anything whatsoever. Procl., *Inst*., 24–25. See also *In Tim*. 1.303.27–304.3 where, he criticizes Atticus and Numenius for not distinguishinging properly between the good and being.

[34] Alcin., *Didask*. 10.3; 12.1, with Opsomer, "Demiurges", 65 note 79. In the same line, Irenaeus refers to the intrinsic relationship between God's goodness and his creation in *Timaeus* 29E in order to attack Marcionites, *Adv. haer*. III 25,5, *et iterum factorem et fabricatorem huius universi talis bonum ostendit: 'Bono autem* (*inquit*) *nulla unquam de quoquam nascitur invidia' hoc initium et causam fabricatoris mundi constituens bonitatem dei*.

[35] See above note 24. Dörrie-Baltes, *Der Platonismus* 5, translate or describe the term φθόνος as "Neid, Kargen, Vorenthalten" (476), or "Verargen" (479).

[36] There are numerous studies on the issue, see H. Merki, *Homoiosis Theoi: von der Platonischen Angleichung an Gott zur Gottähnlichkeit bei Gregor von Nyssa* (Freiburg in der Schweiz 1952); D. Roloff, *Gottähnlichkeit, Vergötlichung und Erhöhung zu seligem Leben: Untersuchungen zur Herkunft der platonischen Angleichung an Gott* (Berlin 1970); D. Sedley, "'Becoming Like God' in the Timaeus and Aristotle", in T. Calvo & L. Brisson, *Interpreting the 'Timaeus'—'Critias': Proceedings of the IV Symposium Platonicum: Selected Papers* (Sankt Augustin 1997) 327–339; J. Annas, *Platonic Ethics, Old and New* (Ithaca–London 1999) 52–71; K. Comoth, "'Homoiosis' bei Platon Und Origenes", *Origeniana Septima* (Leuven 1999) 69–75; E.F. Cooke, "The Moral and Intellectual Development of the Philosopher in Plato's Republic", *AncPhil* 19 (1999) 37–44; D. Sedley, "The Ideal of Godlikeness", in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul* (Oxford 1999) 309–328; M. Erler, "Epicurus as Deus Mortalis: Homoiosis Theoi and Epicurean Self-Cultivation", in Frede & Laks (eds), *Traditions of Theology*, 159–181; D.C. Russell, "Virtue as 'Likeness to God' in Plato and Seneca",

divinization arises, gods and mortals are placed in a relatively egalitarian framework and this is the context in which envy arises.[37] When pondering the differences between divine and human natures, human shortcomings could be seen to be due to a deliberately obstructive attitude by God.[38]

It is in this context that a number of texts vigorously deny the possibility that God might be subject to envy. This is clearly the case, for example, with the fourth tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, called *The Cup*, which asserts that while God gave reason (λόγος) to every human being, not so intellect (νοῦς). In order to explain this peculiarity, *The Cup* explicitly excludes envy as a possible elucidation of God's withholding *nous*:

> τὸν μὲν οὖν λόγον, ὦ Τάτ, ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐμέρισε, τὸν δὲ νοῦν οὐκέτι, οὐ φθονῶν τισιν· ὁ γὰρ φθόνος οὐκ ἔνθεν ἔρχεται, κάτω δὲ συνίσταται ταῖς τὸν νοῦν μὴ ἐχόντων ἀνθρώπων ψυχαῖς.
> – Διὰ τί οὖν, ὦ πάτερ, οὐ πᾶσιν ἐμέρισε τὸν νοῦν ὁ θεός;
> – Ἠθέλησεν, ὦ τέκνον, τοῦτον ἐν μέσῳ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὥσπερ ἆθλον ἱδρῦσθαι.
>
> "God shared reason (λόγος) among all people, O Tat, but not mind (νοῦς), though he begrudged it to none. Grudging envy comes not from on high; it forms below in the souls of people who do not possess mind."
> – "For what reason, then, did god not share mind with all of them, my father?"
> – "He wanted it put between souls, my child, as a prize for them to contest."[39]

The passage seems to echo *Phaedrus* 247A (φθόνος γὰρ ἔξω θείου χόρου ἵσταται), since envy is excluded from the divine region and allocated to the lower realm. However, note that the change of focus, which is now on God's granting or withholding that which may make the individual perfect, has also altered the meaning of φθόνος, which in the *Phaedrus* was equivalent to that of the *Timaeus* 29E.

JHPh 42 (2004) 241–260; J.M. Armstrong, "After the Ascent: Plato on Becoming like God", *OSAPh* 26 (2004) 171–183; D.C. Baltzly, "The Virtues and 'Becoming like God': Alcinous to Proclus", *OSAPh* 26 (2004) 297–321; S. Lavecchia, *Una via che conduce al divino: la 'homoiosis theo' nella filosofia di Platone* (Milan 2006); see, most recently, P.L. Miller, *Becoming God. Pure Reason in Early Greek Philosophy* (London–New York 2011).

[37] For the need of a comparative framework for the development of envy, see L. Roig Lanzillotta, "The Envy of God in the Paradise Story according to the Greek Life of Adam and Eve", in A. Hilhorst et al. (eds), *Flores Florentino. Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (Leiden–Boston 2007) 537–550.

[38] On the issue in the context of the Nag Hammadi writings and the *Corpus Hermeticum*, see L. Roig Lanzillotta, "A Way of Salvation: Becoming like God in Nag Hammadi", in A. Klostergaard Petersen & K. von Stuckrad (eds), *The Gods as Role Models in Western Traditions* (*Numen* special issue 60.1 [2013]). Forthcoming.

[39] *CH* IV 3.

A similar background can be found in the Nag Hammadi treatise *Gospel of Truth*. While ignorance is the greatest evil, knowledge of the Father might help improve human imperfection by providing the means and the goal of the Gnostic search for knowledge, namely the reunion with the source of our being. In this context, *Gos.Truth* rejects the possibility that the Father could enviously withhold knowledge and be responsible for ignorance:

> Although he retained their perfection within himself … the Father was not jealous. What jealousy indeed (could there be) between himself and his members? … He retains within himself their perfection, granting it to them as a return to him, and a perfectly unitary knowledge.[40]

Again, God and man are seen within the same evaluative framework: God is superior and mortals inferior, but the former possesses the key to the latter's eventual existential promotion.[41] Like the Hermetic tract *The Cup*, the *Gospel of Truth* and other Nag Hammadi texts, such as the *Interpretation of Knowledge* or the *Tripartite Tractate*, argue against the possibility that God might withhold knowledge out of envy, since this is excluded from divine nature.

As could be expected, some interpretations of Genesis 2–3 recognize the same background to God prohibiting the act of eating from the tree in the middle of Paradise. In the *Life of Adam and Eve*, the devil attempts to mislead Eve by asserting that God's prohibition is due to his own interest: by denying the first couple knowledge, he affirms, God actually preserves for himself what determines his superiority.[42] That this interpretation was relatively well-known in second-century Christian milieus appears from the testimony of Irenaeus and Theophilus of Antioch who respond by stressing God's goodness.[43]

The same reason can be found in some Nag Hammadi texts, the only difference being that this thorny problem was solved by means of a theological dualism. As already advanced, Gnostics reject the possibility that the highest God could be deemed envious. Given that, in their view, the Paradise

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[40] *Gos.Truth* (NHC I,3) 18.36–19.7.

[41] See Roig Lanzillotta, "The Envy of God in the Paradise Story", 545–549.

[42] *Life of Adam and Eve* 141–152, and especially the devil's conclusion, τοῦτο δὲ γινώσκων ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἔσεσθε ὅμοιοι αὐτοῦ, ἐφθόνησεν ὑμῖν καὶ εἶπεν οὐ φάγεσθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ. σὺ δὲ πρόσχες τῷ φυτῷ καὶ ὄψει δόξαν μεγάλην.

[43] Theophil., *Autol.*, II, 25, διὸ οὐχ ὡς φθονῶν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός, ὡς οἴονται τινες, ἐκέλευσεν μὴ ἐσθίειν ἀπὸ τῆς γνώσεως; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* III 23.6, *Quapropter et eiecit* (*sc. Deus*) *eum* (*sc. Adam*) *de Paradiso et a ligno vitae longe transtulit, non invidens ei lignum vitae, quemadmodum audent quidan dicere, sed miserans eius*.

story *did* show a divine being obstructing the first couple's access to knowledge,[44] they conclude that Genesis could not be describing the actions of the *real* God,[45] but of some other lower being. In fact, the granting or obstructing of the possibility of knowledge is that which in Gnostic texts characterizes the natures of the Father and the lower creator god.

In all these views we might see an echo of Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*, but the conceptual framework has been altered by transposing what is said of God's relationship to the world to the context of the *Theaetetus*, which encourages mortals to follow God and imitate him as far as possible. It is obvious that in such a setting God's sharing or withholding that which might improve the human condition might be interpreted as envy. This is especially the case if one takes into account Aristotle's discussion in the *Metaphysics*, which raises the question—in order to answer it negatively—whether the divinity may censure human attempts to attain something that was seen as an exclusive possession of the gods, namely knowledge.[46]

3. *Conclusions*

It is time to draw some conclusions. I think my analysis has shown that when accusing Herodotus of malice, Plutarch was not thinking of the "envy of the gods". On the one hand, a close reading of Herodotus' section on Solon does not seem to allow such an interpretation. On the other, the analysis of Plutarch's idea of God, as expressed in *How to tell a flatterer from a friend* and *That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible*, seems to point to something else as the stumbling block to his religious spirit. In *The Malice of Herodotus*, Plutarch was reacting against a view of the gods as malevolent beings who enjoy confounding mortals and who are stingy regarding their

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[44] *Ap.John* (NHC II,1) 22.3–7; BG 57.8–18; see also *Testim.Truth* (NHC IX,3) 47.28–30; 48.8–13; *Hyp.Arch.* (NHC II,4) 90.6–10; *Orig.World* (NHC II,5) 119.5.

[45] See, for example, the conclusion to *Testim.Truth*'s (NHC IX,3) retelling of the Paradise Story 48.1–4: "What sort of God is this? First [he] was envious of Adam that he should eat from the tree of knowledge. And secondly he said, "Adam where are you?" So, God did not have foreknowledge? … What sort of God is this? Indeed, great is the blindness of those who read (this) and have not recognized him!".

[46] Arist., *Metaph.* 982B32–983 A 5, "If, then, there is something in what the poets say, and jealousy is natural to the divine power, it would probably occur in this case above all, and all who excelled in this knowledge would be unfortunate. But the divine power cannot be jealous (nay, according to the proverb, 'bards tell a lie'), nor should any other science be thought more honorable than one of this sort". In this vein, see *Gos.Truth* (NHC I,3) 18.34–19.10; *Trip.Trac* (NHC I,5) 62.20–33; *Interpr. Know.* (NHC XI,1) 15.18–21.

prerogatives. As to the former, Plutarch's most basic interpretation of Plato's definition of God in *Tim*. 29E allows him to reject any negative element from divine nature. As to the latter, his quotation of Diogenes' on the gods sharing their goods with their friends, clearly shows that he understands φθόνος as "avarice" or "stinginess".

The brief survey of the Platonic receptions of *Tim*. 29E seems to support this interpretation insofar as they show that in spite of the semantic pregnancy of Plato's passage, envy never played a role in their disquisitions. In order to find such an interpretation we need a new evaluative framework, a new context, in which God and men are placed at a similar existential level, knowledge being the only issue separating divine and human natures. This complex situation can be found in the background to some of the early Christian texts referred to in my exposition.

Thus, it was not divine envy, but stinginess that bothered Plutarch in relation to Herodotus' motto θεῖον πᾶν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες, and this is the interpretation one might reach by placing Plutarch's views in the context of the religious and philosophical discourse of Late Antiquity.

PLUTARCH AS APOLLO'S PRIEST AT DELPHI

Angelo Casanova

It is well known that Plutarch was Apollo's priest at Delphi: this is seldom mentioned in his own works, but it has often been discussed by several scholars in his large bibliography. I have no new documents about this matter to add to what has been said, for instance, by Ziegler in his monograph[1] and by Burkert in his lecture at the 1995 Conference in Salerno devoted to Plutarch and religion.[2] I only wish to refer briefly to the few passages in which Plutarch tells about his activity as Apollo's priest—and to the inscriptions which confirm his activity at Delphi—with the object to gain a better understanding of other passages in his works, particularly of one in the *The E at Delphi*.

It is not my intention to refer to the whole content of the three Delphic dialogues (*The E at Delphi*, *Oracles at Delphi no longer given in verse*, *The obsolescence of oracles*), nor will I add the fourth one, the *On the delays of divine vengeance* (and the other theological writings which have been lost, but whose titles are recorded in what is known as Lamprias' Catalogue). I only wish to consider the two passages in which Plutarch explicitly refers to his activity as Apollo's priest at Delphi, namely *An sen.* 17, 792F, and *Qu. conv.* 7.2, 700E, in conjunction with the Delphic inscriptions *Syll.*[3] 829A and 842–843, in order to shed new light on other Plutarchean passages, first of all *The E at Delphi* 1, 385A.

The text affording more information is undoubtedly the first one.[3] In chapter 17 of the work *Whether an old man should engage in public affairs* Plutarch is discussing whether political activity should be given up in old age, and he answers his interlocutor's argument with this analogy:

> Καὶ μὴν οἶσθά με τῷ Πυθίῳ λειτουργοῦντα πολλὰς Πυθιάδας· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν εἴποις "ἱκανά σοι, ὦ Πλούταρχε, τέθυται καὶ πεπόμπευται καὶ κεχόρευται, νῦν δ' ὥρα πρεσβύτερον ὄντα τὸν στέφανον ἀποθέσθαι καὶ τὸ χρηστήριον ἀπολιπεῖν διὰ τὸ γῆρας".

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[1] K. Ziegler, *Plutarco* (Ital. ed.; Brescia 1965).

[2] W. Burkert, "Plutarco: religiosità personale e teologia filosofica", in I. Gallo (ed.), *Plutarco e la religione. Atti del VI Convegno plutarcheo. Ravello, 29–31 maggio 1995* (Naples 1997) 11–28.

[3] Plu., *An sen.* 17, 792F: Καὶ μὴν οἶσθά με τῷ Πυθίῳ λειτουργοῦντα πολλὰς Πυθιάδας κτλ.

> Now, surely you know that I have been serving the Pythian Apollo for many Pythiads (or quadriennia), but you would not say: "Plutarch: you have done enough sacrificing, marching in processions, and dancing in choruses, and now that you are older it is time to put off the garland and to desert the oracle on account of your age".[4]

This passage is useful for dating the work, which was probably written in Hadrian's time, namely about 120 CE; it lets us know that Plutarch was one of the Delphic priests for a long time: according to Burkert[5] the words "many Pythiads (i.e. quadriennia)" mean "about twenty years" and the passage is an important source for the Delphic ritual, of which Plutarch was officiant and eye-witness. For example, the sacrifice he is alluding to is certainly the one preliminary to the consultation of the Delphic oracle: the πρόθυσις, which was performed by one of Apollo's two priests.[6] From this passage Burkert draws the conclusion that Plutarch was able to perform it "with a great financial expenditure" contributing "with his personal estate too". Now, it is clear that it was a "liturgy" (as confirmed by the verb used by Plutarch), but I doubt that the priestly service at Delphi was performed at the priests' own expense. It is true that in the classical age, at Athens and elsewhere, the public liturgies were performed at the expense of a rich citizen, that is it was a form of taxation: but the word "liturgy" underwent a long evolution in antiquity (and in the history of religions).[7] In my opinion we should rather think that religious service at Delphi was probably paid for either by the pilgrims who came to consult the oracle or by the Delphic organization.

Apart from this, Plutarch himself confirms in another passage that the Pythian Apollo's priests were two (in office at the same time). At *Qu. conv.* 7.2 (700E) he relates that, in a "table-talk" in Delphi, during a banquet, some of his friends (τινες … τῶν ἑταίρων) asked him for the second time a question that was raised during the communal readings from Plato.[8] Plutarch says with a smile he had good advocates for refusing to oblige:

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[4] Translation by H.N. Fowler, *Plutarch's Moralia*, X (London–Cambridge 1969).

[5] Burkert, "Plutarco: religiosità personale", 12.

[6] See R. Flacelière, *Devins et oracles grecs* (Paris 1961) 59; G. Roux, *Delphes, son oracle et ses dieux* (Paris 1976) 82. I owe this reference to M. Cuvigny's notes in *Plutarque*, *Oeuvres morales*, XI.1 (Paris 1984) 105.

[7] See the entry λειτουργέω (et sim.) in G. Kittel & G. Friedrich (eds), *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento*, Ital. ed., VI (Brescia 1970) 589–634 (H. Strathmann).

[8] Namely, what sort of person was called by Plato "horn-hard" (*kerasbolos*) or "obdurate" (*ateramon*).

> Εἶχον μὲν οὖν ἀρνούμενος οὐ φαύλους συνηγόρους, Εὐθύδημον τὸν συνιερέα καὶ Πατροκλέα τὸν γαμβρόν, οὐκ ὀλίγα τοιαῦτα τῶν ἀπὸ γεωργίας καὶ κυνηγίας προφέροντας·
>
> I refused the request, and got no mean support from Euthydemus, my colleague in priesthood, and Patrocleas my son-in-law, who cited a good number of similar phenomena out of their experience in farming and hunting.[9]

It is not my intention, now, to investigate who these people were, because their identification is questionable.[10] Suffice it to point out that Plutarch is referring to his colleague in a free and easy way: Εὐθύδημον τὸν συνιερέα. He does not wish to flaunt his priestly office, nor does he want to hide it.

Everybody knows that archaeologists have found the inscription which was placed at the base of a statue of the emperor Hadrian, erected by the Amphictyonic council under Plutarch's direction. The text is in Dittenberger, *Syll.*[3] 829A, and says:

> Αὐτοκράτορα Καίσαρα, θεοῦ Τραϊανοῦ Παρθικοῦ υἱόν, θεοῦ Νέρβα υἱωνόν, Τραϊανὸν Ἁδριανὸν Σεβαστὸν τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Ἀμφικτυόνων, ἐπιμελητεύοντος ἀπὸ Δελφῶν Μεστρίου Πλουτάρχου τοῦ ἱερέως.
>
> The emperor Caesar, son of the god Trajan Parthicos (i.e conqueror of the Parthians), grandson of the god Nerva, Trajan Hadrian August: the Amphictyons' community (erected) through the Delphic cares of the priest Mestrios Plutarch.

All this is very interesting, but here I only wish to point out that the erection of the statue was deliberated by the community of the Amphictyons (τὸ κοινόν) under the control and direction of Plutarch, who is called Mestrios Plutarch, that is with his Roman name, and is qualified as Delphic priest. Clearly he is the curator, the Amphictyonic delegate (ἐπιμελετής), in charge of the execution of the Amphictyons' deliberation, in his capacity of Delphic priest.

Thanks to this inscription, we understand better *Syll.*[3] 843, where two inscriptions are recorded: the first one (A) shows an elegiac couplet written on the base of a herm of Plutarch, carved in Pentelic marble, which was erected in the Amphictyonic synedrion (near the Thermopylae: see Hdt. 7.200), by Delphians and Chaeroneans together. The text says:

> Δελφοὶ Χαιρωνεῦσιν ὁμοῦ Πλούταρχον ἔθηκαν
> τοῖς Ἀμφικτυόνων δόγμασι πειθόμενοι.
>
> Delphians and Chaeroneans together put up Plutarch's statue in obedience to the Amphictyons' decrees.

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[9] Translation by E.L. Minar, *Plutarch's Moralia*, IX (London–Cambridge 1961).

[10] See J. Sirinelli, *Plutarque*, *Oeuvres morales*, IX.3 (Paris 1996) 211.

Probably it is a statue erected in Plutarch's memory just after his death.

Similarly, another herm portraying Plutarch (B)—found headless—was erected in Chaeronea by Philinos (a friend of Plutarch's whom we meet in *Qu. conv*. 1.6.1).

Other inscriptions, recorded in Dittemberg, *Syll.*[3] 844, concern Plutarch's offspring: we find the name Autoboulos in A and B, but the first is probably Plutarch's grandson (or grand-nephew), not his son; the second one is Plutarch's sixth descendant.

These documents, in my opinion, make it easier to understand many passages in Plutarch's works. I am not referring to the three (or four) "Pythian Dialogues", but to passages of other works. For reasons of space, I can discuss only three here.

First of all I wish to make a short reference to *An sen*. 785C, where Plutarch states that nobody is forced to leave the Amphictyons' chairmanship, when old, and devote himself to agriculture. Probably, Plutarch is referring to someone among his friends and colleagues, or maybe to himself.

Secondly, I wish to refer to *On Isis and Osiris* (378D), where Plutarch says:

> διὸ τῷ μὲν εἰς τὸ χρηστήριον ἐνταῦθα κατιόντι παρεγγυῶμεν ὅσια φρονεῖν, εὔφημα λέγειν· οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ γελοῖα δρῶσιν ἐν ταῖς πομπαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἑορταῖς εὐφημίαν προκηρύττοντες, εἶτα περὶ τῶν θεῶν αὐτῶν τὰ δυσφημότατα καὶ λέγοντες καὶ διανοούμενοι.
>
> We exhort anyone who comes down to the oracle, here, to think holy thoughts and to speak words of good omen. But the mass of mankind act ridiculously, because they proclaim the use of words of good omen in their processions and festivals, but they both say and think the most unhallowed thoughts about the very gods.[11]

Clearly, we may recognize in these words the sermonizing tone of the Delphic priest and his dissatisfaction for the shabbiness of the daily reality of which he was eye-witness at Apollo's temple. Plutarch is speaking with great plainness, and takes it for granted that everybody knows he is Apollo's priest at Delphi, and for this very reason entitled to give advice and admonishment to people consulting the oracle. Please, note two words in the text: ἐνταῦθα κατιόντι. The *On Isis and Osiris* too appears to be written or to take place at

[11] The translation is mine. I do not like the translation by F.C. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, V (London–Cambridge 1962) 159: "For this reason we give instructions to anyone who comes down to the oracle here to think holy thoughts and to speak words of good omen. But the mass of mankind act ridiculously in their processions and festivals in that they proclaim at the outset the use of words of good omen, but later they both say and think the most unhallowed thoughts about the very gods".

Delphi, and the preverb κατά shows the direction of the pilgrims going *down* to the temple from the Pythian stadium (not up by the *via sacra*, the holy way).

Thirdly and lastly, I wish to tackle the problems posed by the text of *The E at Delphi* 385A, where Plutarch comes to the issue concerning the meaning of the great E situated up in front in Apollo's temple at Delphi[12] and lets us know that the question had already come up in his school. Here is the transmitted text, as given in the Loeb edition by F.C. Babbitt (1962):

> πολλάκις οὖν ἄλλοτε τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ σχολῇ προβαλλόμενον ἐκκλίνας ἀτρέμα καὶ παρελθών, ἔναγχος ὑπὸ τῶν υἱῶν ἐλήφθην ξένοις τισὶ συμφιλοτιμούμενος, οὓς εὐθὺς ἐκ Δελφῶν ἀπαίρειν μέλλοντας οὐκ ἦν εὐπρεπὲς παράγειν οὐδὲ παραιτεῖσθαι, πάντως ἀκοῦσαί τι προθυμουμένους.

This is his translation:

> On many other occasions when the subject had been brought up in the school I had quietly turned aside from it and passed it over, but recently I was unexpectedly discovered by my sons in an animated discussion with some strangers, whom, since they purposed to leave Delphi immediately, it was not seemly to try to divert from the subject, nor was it seemly for me to ask to be excused from the discussion, for they were altogether eager to hear something about it.[13]

There is no problem in the manuscript tradition of the text, and the translation is excellent. Nevertheless, all subsequent editions have changed text and interpretation, unanimously accepting the correction συμφιλοτιμουμένων, suggested by Paton in 1893.

It has been accepted, of course, by Sieveking in the new Teubner edition, which is part of the complete edition by Paton-Pohlenz-Sieveking,[14] but it has also been accepted by Flacelière (in his Belles Lettres edition).[15] It is supposed in Lozza's Italian translation[16] and it appears again in Moreschini's edition with commentary in the *Corpus Plutarchi Moralium*.[17]

The meaning they get from the text so corrected is this: "recentemente fui costretto dai miei figli, che insistevano insieme con alcuni stranieri

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[12] Not on the pediment of the temple, as some scholars write (see F. Ferrari, "La costruzione del platonismo nel *De E apud Delphos* di Plutarco", *Athenaeum* 98 (2010) 71–87 at 71 and n. 2, p. 74), but inside the temple, in first position closest to the god, as Plutarch writes (ἐν προεδρίᾳ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ).

[13] Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, V, 201.

[14] W.R. Paton – M. Pohlenz & W. Sieveking, *Plutarchi Moralia*, III (Leipzig 1972).

[15] R. Flacelière, *Plutarque, Dialogues Pythiques* (Paris 1974) 4–5.

[16] D. Del Corno, *Plutarco, Dialoghi Delfici* (Milan ^{2}1990).

[17] C. Moreschini, *Plutarco, L'E di Delfi* (Naples 1997).

etc." (Moreschini)[18] or "ieri fui vinto dall'insistenza dei miei figli, che volevano compiacere ad alcuni stranieri in procinto di lasciare Delfi" (Lozza).[19] Flacelière translated: "je ne pus échapper aux instances de mes fils jointes à celles de certains étrangers". The strangest instance is Vincenzo Cilento's:[20] he retained the manuscript text, συμφιλοτιμούμενος, and translated: "vi sono stato costretto dai miei figli, a gara con alcuni stranieri".[21]

Now, according to Moreschini's commentary (p. 24), Paton's correction "è necessaria per evitare la contorta spiegazione di Hirzel",[22] that is "it is needed to avoid the far-fetched explanation given by Hirzel", namely that the news had been brought to Athens by Plutarch's sons and therefore Sarapion could have been asking Plutarch to send him the "Pythian dialogues".

I admit that Hirzel's supposition is probably ill-founded and whimsical, but I do not think this should impel us to correct the text. Quite the opposite, I see strong reasons to reject the correction.

First of all, there is a strong linguistic reason. Actually the main verb ἐλήφθην means neither "fui costretto" (I was forced), nor "fui vinto, convinto" (I was prevailed upon, persuaded), but rather "I was caught, surprised, discovered, found" (fui colto, sorpreso, scoperto, trovato)–in the active form: to catch, take by surprise, find, come upon—, as anyone can gather from the common dictionaries, e.g. the classic *LSJ* or the *Greek-Italian dictionary* by F. Montanari, who refers to Hdt. 2.89.2, Antipho 1.3 etc., and then adds S., *Tr*. 808 (βουλεύσασ' … καὶ δρῶσ' ἐλήφθης, "you were surprised intriguing and committing such crimes"), and Lys. 13.66 (ἐλήφθη μοιχός, "he was caught in the very act of adultery"). Furthermore, I would like to point out that, in this meaning, the verb is usually accompanied by the predicative participle (in Acc. with the active form: to catch s.o. doing s.th.; in Nom. with the passive form: to be found doing s.th.). Clearly, Plutarch is simply surprised by his sons, who are arriving at Delphi unexpected.

In the second place, I would like to draw attention to the fact that, as made clear by what follows, Plutarch is not prevailed upon by his sons: actually he is persuaded by the insistences of the strangers, who—before

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[18] English translation: "recently I was forced by my sons, who insisted, together with some strangers".

[19] English translation: "yesterday I was prevailed upon by the insistence of my sons, who wanted to please some strangers who were about to leave Delphi".

[20] V. Cilento, *Plutarco, Diatriba Isiaca e Dialoghi Delfici* (Florence 1962).

[21] English translation: "I was forced by my sons, in competition with some strangers".

[22] R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog. Ein literarhistorischer Versuch*, II (Hildesheim 1963 [1895]) 202 and n. 1.

leaving—want to hear some answer at any cost (πάντως ἀκοῦσαί τι προθυμουμένους).

As for the participle, I remind that the verb συμφιλοτιμέομαι means "to compete", not "to please" (nor "to insist"). And I cannot imagine a competition … in insistence between sons and strangers.

Rather, if we keep in mind that in Delphi Plutarch is carrying out his duties as Apollo's priest, it is obvious that he feels himself obliged to give some kind of answer to a theologically important question posed by a group of pilgrims who are about to leave. I find it very likely that the priest Plutarch, when asked in great haste by "some strangers who were on the point of leaving", should describe himself as quickly enumerating, with them, and almost in competition (συμφιλοτιμούμενος), the several explanations that had been proposed for the "Delphic E". In that moment he is taken by surprise by the arrival of his sons, whom he knows to be interested in the subject: so he does not like (is ashamed) to avoid the problem once more, and thus to disappoint the expectations of people who wish to hear him talk about it. Therefore, he has them seated all along the temple and starts a long discussion with all of them. So, when he reflects about the situation, both the subject and the place remind him of a similar discussion which was held by Ammonius and others, including himself, many years earlier, when he was young, "in the time when Nero came to Greece".

Therefore I find Paton's correction to be illogical and harmful: in my opinion it is obvious that Plutarch, as a professor, could avoid answering certain questions in his school; but—as Apollo's priest at Delphi—he could not do so, both for good manners and because of his priestly duty. The mention of his sons' sudden arrival needs not cause any astonishment on the grounds that "it is not supported by what is said later on" (as Hirzel thought). This detail explains why Plutarch, who has avoided this subject up to now, goes as far as writing about it at this time. His sons too have heard the recent Delphic discussion and perhaps have reported it to others. There is no more reason to avoid the subject: quite the opposite, it will be better to give friends, first of all Sarapion, an account of the "great" discussion about it held by Ammonius many years before. Actually it should not escape us that the discussion reported in this work is not the recent one, held by Plutarch with group of pilgrims and his sons, but the old discussion, held in 67 CE by Ammonius and others, including a Plutarch who was young and full of enthusiasm for mathematics. Surely the old Plutarch remembers it all with a little bit of nostalgia and, no doubt, with a smile on his face.

Naturally, the real meaning of the Delphic E has been a great problem at all times, and continues to be one up to now.

PLUTARCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ASTRAL BIOLOGY*

Aurelio Pérez Jiménez

1. *Plutarch's Belief on Astral Influence*

Although Plutarch was well acquainted with astrology, if we exclude a couple of isolated references, we do not find in his works relevant discussions on the subject. In previous articles I collected virtually all the relevant passages from *Lives* and *Moralia*, together with other passing allusions to the activity of astrologers or to the attitude of some of his characters towards this divinatory art. However, he accepts certain astro-meteorological influences of the Sun, the Moon, or of other stars of special religious significance like Sirius, on human, animal and vegetable physiology,[1] which does not seem to contradict in any way the principles of divine Providence of a convinced Platonist like Plutarch. Indeed, he assumes without too much prejudice some of these beliefs both when they seem to be established on the experience of peasants and when they favor a more or less scientific explanation for some issues of myth and religion, helping in this way to correct other more irrational superstitions.

Given that I already paid attention to the general principles and to the discussion of concrete Plutarchean passages on this subject in a recent study,[2] I will not insist on the importance of lunar physics for the scientific justification of its influences. Besides, Angelo Casanova[3] and myself[4]

* This article is part of the FFI 2009–12353 Research Project funded by the DGICYT of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

[1] The general influences on plants and animals have been already treated, with reference to the main ancient sources, by W.H.R. Roscher, *Über Selene und Verwandtes* (Leipzig 1890) 61–67.

[2] A. Pérez Jiménez, "Astrometeorología y creencias sobre los astros en Plutarco", in G. Roskam & L. Van der Stockt (eds), *Virtues for the People. Aspects of Plutarchan Ethics* (Leuven 2011) 259–271.

[3] A. Casanova, "Plutarco, *Quaest. conv*. III, 659A: gli influssi della luna", in A. Pérez Jiménez & F. Titchener (eds), *Valori letterari delle opere di Plutarco. Studi offerti al Professore Italo Gallo dall' International Plutarch Society* (Malaga–Logan 2005) 67–74.

[4] A. Pérez Jiménez, "Astrometeorología e influencia lunar en las *Quaestiones convivales*

have also dealt with other similar issues in *Table Talks*, such as the interpretation of some passages on the influence of the moon on meat, wood, grain, wine and human behavior. In the following pages therefore I propose a new reading of other sections, particularly from the *On Isis and Osiris* and from the *Commentary on Hesiod's Works and Days*, which are related to Plutarch's views on astral influences on the biology of plants and animals. These views do not differ much from the opinions of his contemporaries. Incidentally Plutarch proposes these astral influences as a physical explanation for certain curious elements of Egyptian religion.

2. *Some Examples of the Influence of Sun and Moon on Plants and Animals*

Plutarch accepts as a fact of experience that some plants are especially linked to the Sun and the Moon. Thus, for example, roses, violets and sunflowers.[5] Of course, the attribution of the latter to the sun does not arise from any speculative reason, but from the simple evidence of the movements of this plant, which elevates and declines according to the rise and setting of the sun, as Plutarch maintains in fragment 101 from the *Commentary on Works and Days*:

> Δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ τῶν φυτῶν τὰ μὲν σελήνῃ συγκινούμενα τὰ δ' ἡλίῳ· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ῥόδα καὶ ἴα καὶ μετὰ τούτων τὰ ἡλιοτρόπια πρὸς ἥλιον ἀνίσχοντα τρέπει τὰ φύλλα καὶ πρὸς καταδυόμενον ὡσαύτως εἰς ἑσπέραν ῥέποντα …
>
> This is shown indeed by plants, some of which move in conjunction with the moon, others with the sun. Roses and violets and also the heliotropes turn their leaves to the rising sun and similarly to the setting sun, inclining towards the west …[6]

It is different in the case of onions, since their linkage with the Moon is of a more extraordinary character: this bulb goes against the imitative principle which governs all the astrological speculations and the pretended scientific explanations of lunar influence. Indeed the onion differs from other plants, organs and animals governed by the moon, since it decreases when the latter grows and increases with the waning moon. In *On Isis and Osiris*

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de Plutarco", in J. Ribeiro Ferreira et al. (eds), *Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch* (Coimbra 2009) 447–458.

[5] Sunflowers are logically classified as solar plants also in astrological treaties such as that of Thesallus.

[6] Transl. F.H. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia*, XV (London–Cambridge 1969) 209.

(353F), Plutarch refers that its growth coincides with the waning moon (and not with the crescent) and that Egyptian priests therefore reject them:

> οἱ δ' ἱερεῖς ἀφοσιοῦνται καὶ δυσχεραίνουσι καὶ τὸ κρόμμυον παραφυλάττοντες, ὅτι τῆς σελήνης φθινούσης μόνον εὐτροφεῖν τοῦτο καὶ τεθηλέναι πέφυκεν.
>
> But the priests keep themselves clear of the onion and detest it and are careful to avoid it, because it is the only plant that naturally thrives and flourishes in the waning of the moon.[7]

That he was especially interested in the phenomenon is clear from the fact that he mentions it again in the *Commentary to Hesiod*. Even if the Greek text is not preserved, an interesting reference by Aulus Gellius[8] sufficiently testimonies this view:

> *Cepetum revirescit et congerminat decedente luna, contra autem inarescit adolescente. Eam causam esse dicunt sacerdotes Aegyptii, cur Pelusiotae cepe non edint, quia solum olerum omnium contra lunae augmenta atque damna vices minuendi et augendi habeat contrarias*.[9]
>
> The onion grows and buds as the moon wanes, but, on the contrary, dries up while the moon waxes. The Egyptian priests say that this is the reason why the people of Pelusium do not eat the onion, because it is the only one of all vegetables which has an interchange of increase and decrease contrary to the waxing and the waning of the moon.[10]

Well, such scientific irregularity helps in the text from the *On Isis and Osiris* to reinforce other arguments of practical and ethical religious character by means of which Plutarch justifies the Egyptian priests' rejection of onions in order to present it not as a simple superstition, but as due to natural reasons that turn it into an impure plant. In spite of other religious considerations that justified a negative attitude of Egyptian priests towards onions, such as the relation between Typhon-Seth and the periods of the moon on the wane,[11] Plutarch's position complies with more scientific criteria. Indeed he does not manifest any disagreement with the doctrine that explains the prohibition on eating onions just because they grow when the moon decreases. Furthermore, Plutarch applies the same explanation to the impurity and subsequent repugnance among the Egyptians with respect to the pig. Also

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[7] Transl. F.C. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, V (London–Cambridge 1969) 21.

[8] Gell., *Noct. Att*. 20.8: *Id etiam' inquit 'multo mirandum est magis, quod apud Plutarchum in quarto in Hesiodum commentario legi*.

[9] Gell., *Noct. Att*. 20.8.7.

[10] Transl. J.C. Rolfe, *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, III (Cambridge ^{5}1978) 445.

[11] See J. Hani, *La religion Égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque* (Paris 1976) 313–314.

in this case the Egyptian taboo has to do with the association of the animal with Typhon-Seth (indeed, when astrology later identified Seth with Saturn, the pig became a saturnine animal). It is very likely that our author shares the very well documented religious reasons that explained the pigs' impurity,[12] but as in the case of onions, he truly justifies the rejection of their meat by the priests owing to the anomaly of their behavior in relation to the moon: in fact, according to the belief echoed by Plutarch pigs mate at the time of the waning moon and not with the waxing moon, as other animals in general do. Such an anomaly has surely to do with the fact that pigs main sexual activity appears at the most favorable moment for castration, which, as many other activities which involve elimination—such as the pruning and the harvest in the case of plants—must take place at the time of the waning moon,[13] since it was believed that at this time biological activity in general and sexual appetite in particular decreased. Consequently, as regards onions and pigs, the physical explanation for their anomalous behavior could be, as we have suggested elsewhere,[14] the earthly condition of both. It is therefore likely that the association is due to the fact that the moon is not visible during the noon and the main part of the waning of the moon, because it is beside the sun under the earth. We cannot agree with Lunais, who on the basis of a text from Columella, understands the expression *infra terram* in literal sense (and not as a reference to the nocturnal position) with reference to the moon.[15]

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[12] See Hani, *La religion*, 320–323.

[13] A text from *Geoponica* 5.46 recommends the vintage, following Zoroaster as source, during the waning moon: σπουδάζειν δὲ χρή, ληγούσης αὐτῆς καὶ ὑπογείου οὔσης τὸν τρυγητὸν ποιεῖσθαι. See Plin., *HN* 18.321: *Omnia quae caeduntur, carpuntur, tondentur, innocentius decrescente luna quam crescente fiunt*; 322: *stercus nisi decrescente luna ne tangito, maxime autem intermenstrua dimidiaque stercorato*; 322: *verres, iuvencos, arietes, haedos decrescente luna castrato*.

[14] Pérez Jiménez, "Astrometeorología y creencias", 266.

[15] S. Lunais, *Recherches sur la Lune*, I (Leiden 1979) 52: "En revanche, pour certaines plantes dont la partie comestible croît sous terre comme l'ail et l'oignon, ces mêmes auteurs recommandent de planter lorsque la lune est *infra terram*, sous terre. Cette expression n'indique pas une période de la lunaison mais un moment de la journée, car la lune passe sous terre chaque jour." But, if the expression *infra terram* does not refer to a lunar phase it is, in our view, absurd to use it to refer to the moon. Besides practically all the recommendations to peasants found in ancient lunar calendars have to do with the phases of the moon and not with its real position in the visible hemisphere of the ecliptic. That the expression "under earth" refers to the time of the month when the moon is not visible during the night because of its vicinity to the conjunction seems clear from other texts, such as the one from *Geoponica* 5.46 quoted in the previous note. The activities to be performed at the time of the waxing or waning moon (see Plin., *HN* 18.321 and 322, see above, note 7) coincide, thus, with those recommended when it is *supra terram* and *sub terram* (Idem, 18.322: *ventilari*

Plutarch also considers the relations of other animals with the sun and the moon. This is the case of elephants, whose value as a symbol of mercy is the topic of anecdotes like the one of Porus and Alexander. Thus, for example, in *De sollertia animalium* where the elephant is presented not only as a symbol, but also as an example of εὐσέβεια (piety). Plutarch attributes the virtue to the animal by taking note of the elephants' habit of prostrating and cleansing themselves at sunrise. The subject was a favorite one in the literary and iconographic tradition of European humanism.[16]

As regards the Ibis, Plutarch mentions the moonlike shape of its white and black feathers,[17] a feature that turns it into a lunar bird and that explains symbolically the adoration of the bird by the Egyptians. *De fluviis*[18] includes another interesting reference to the connection with the moon of a fish living in the river Arar called *escolopia*,[19] which changes its color according to the waxing and waning of the moon: οὗτος αὐξανομένης τῆς σελήνης λευκός ἐστιν· μειουμένης δὲ μέλας γίνεται παντελῶς. In this latter case, however, Plutarch just mentions the phenomenon and he neither provides us with an explanation nor does he comment on the issue.

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quoque frumenta ac legumina et condi circa extremam lunam iubent, seminaria, cum luna supra terram sit, fieri, calcari musta, cum luna sub terra, item materias caedi quaeque alia suis locis diximus).

[16] It was object of explanation by part of Johannes Pierius Valerianus: in his *Hieroglyphica, sive de sacris Aegyptiorum aliarumque gentium literis, commentariorum libri LVIII*, II 16, pp. 23–24 of the Cologne edition (1685), he mentions this tradition to illustrate the virtue of the *Pietas*. J. Camerarius' *Symbola et emblemata* II (Nürnberg 1595) embl. 1, f. 9r shows us the image of an elephant worshipping the Moon (according to Solinus) and in his commentary the author collects the main ancient sources about the topic. Other examples of the echo of the subject in the 16th and 17th centuries are the Spanish Cristóbal de Acosta—who in his *Tractado de las drogas y medicinas de las Indias orientales* (Burgos 1578) devotes a chapter to the elephant ("Tractado del elephante y sus calidades", 417–448), where he also pays attention to the piety of the animal (424)—and the famous scholarly Justus Lipsius, author of a *Laus elephantis*, that was inserted in the book *Disertationum ludicrarum et amoenitatum Scriptores varii* (Leiden 1638) 417–443; furthermore he presents the animal as an example of religiousness in his *Epist. L* (*Epistolarum selectarum centuria prime miscellanea* [Antwerp 1605] 65).

[17] Plu., *De Is*. 381D: … ἔτι δ' ἡ τῶν μελάνων πτερῶν πρὸς τὰ λευκὰ ποικιλία καὶ μῖξις ἐμφαίνει σελήνην ἀμφίκυρτον.

[18] Plu., [*De fluviis*] 1149A–1166C. There is a new excellent edition of this pseudo-Plutarchean treatise (with italian translation and commentary) by E. Calderón Dorda – A. De Lazzer & E. Pellizer, *Fiumi e monti*, *Corpus Moralium Plutarchi* (Naples 2003).

[19] Plu., [*De fluviis*] 6.1, 1153C. The existence of this fish, called *clopia* in other testimonies, is testified by the doxographer Calisthenes from Sibaris, from whom Plutarch takes the reference, by Stobaeus (4.36.16, κλουπαῖα), by Lydus (*Mens*. 3.11: κλοπία) and by Glycas (p. 88 Bonnensis: κλωπία).

Somewhat different is the case of the of lion's relationship with the sun: this is the only quadruped born with its eyes open.[20] The reference would have been nothing more than an anecdote without importance, if Plutarch did not include it in a passage with other astrological allusions to Egyptian beliefs. Indeed Bolus of Mendes preserved by the grammarian Appion of Alexandria,[21] favors the assimilation of the God Sun-Osiris with the sign of Leo (astrological house of the Sun), when the flood of Nile takes place. And, in point of fact, the lion usually appears as symbol of the Sun and as an animal devoted to it in other literary and astrological documents.[22]

Since we have referred to a feline, the lion, it is time to speak now about another and more interesting animal associated with the moon. I am referring to the link between cats and the moon, already well attested in Greco-Egyptian culture by the identification of some moon-divinities like Artemis and Hecate with the ancient Cat Goddess Bastet. As regards Plutarch, this relationship is documented in some significant passages from *Moralia*. The first and more important one is again a passage from the *On Isis and Osiris* (376E), that has to do with the procreation of cats. The text connects the total amount of cats a female cat can bring forth in its life to the days of the lunar month:

> λέγεται γὰρ ἓν τίκτειν, εἶτα δύο καὶ τρία καὶ τέσσαρα καὶ πέντε, καὶ καθ' ἓν οὕτως ἄχρι τῶν ἑπτὰ προστίθησιν, ὥστ' ὀκτὼ καὶ εἴκοσι τὰ πάντα τίκτειν, ὅσα καὶ τῆς σελήνης φῶτ' ἔστιν.
>
> For the cat is said to bring forth first one, then two and three and four and five, thus increasing the number by one until she reaches seven, so that she brings forth in all twenty-eight, the number also of the moon's illuminations.[23]

Although there is only one other piece of evidence, attributed by Photius to Damascius, according to which the order of the number of offspring a cat

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[20] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 4.5, 670C: τὸν δὲ λέοντα τῷ ἡλίῳ συνοικειοῦσιν, ὅτι τῶν γαμψωνύχων τετραπόδων βλέποντα τίκτει μόνος, κοιμᾶται δ' ἀκαρὲς χρόνου καὶ ἀπολάμπει τὰ ὄμματα καθεύδοντος· κρῆναι δὲ [καὶ] κατὰ χασμάτων λεοντείων ἐξιᾶσι κρουνούς, ὅτι Νεῖλος ἐπάγει νέον ὕδωρ ταῖς Αἰγυπτίων ἀρούραις ἡλίου τὸν λέοντα παροδεύοντος.

[21] Thus Wellmann quoted by S.T. Teodorsson, *A Commentary on Plutarch's Table Talks*, II (Gothenburg 1990) 104. But, as Aristotle and other authors indicate, the contrary is what really happens: lions are born with their eyes closed, which they open between the four and eight days after birth. Aelian knows this too (*NA* 4.34: οἱ δὲ σκύμνοι ἀρτιγενεῖς μικροί τέ εἰσι καὶ τυφλοὶ κατὰ τὰ σκυλάκια), but in *NA* 5.39, quoting Democritus (= Bolus of Mendes), nevertheless echoes the view we find in Plutarch: λέγει Δημόκριτος τῶν ζῴων μόνον τὸν λέοντα ἐκπεπταμένοις τίκτεσθαι τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς.

[22] See Teodorsson, *A Commentary*, 103–104.

[23] Transl. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, V, 151.

can bring forth is the reverse (first seven, then six, etc.),[24] the above cited text must be placed in connection with the tradition that sees cats as children of the moon.[25] According to Plutarch, this tradition has little scientific basis and in fact he considers it fictitious: τοῦτο μὲν οὖν ἴσως μυθωδέστερον. Something different is, in his view, the incontestable reality of the imitative changes of the cats' pupils, which dilate and diminish according to the increasing and waning of the moon[26] (376F):

> αἱ δ' ἐν τοῖς ὄμμασιν αὐτοῦ κόραι πληροῦσθαι μὲν καὶ πλατύνεσθαι δοκοῦσιν ἐν πανσελήνῳ, λεπτύνεσθαι δὲ καὶ μαραυγεῖν ἐν ταῖς μειώσεσι τοῦ ἄστρου.
>
> But the pupils in the eye of the cat appear to grow large and round at the time of full moon, and to become thin and narrow at the time of the waning of that heavenly body.[27]

With a view to explaining this sympathy, however, Plutarch does not refrain from speculating on the causes. In his view it is due to the logic and rationality of the phases of the moon.

He refers again to the subject in an allusion included in his *Commentary to the Works and Days* (fr. 101), in which the phenomenon affects the liver of mice:

> τὰ δὲ τῶν αἰλούρων ὄμματά φασι καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα τῶν μυῶν πάντων φθίνειν μὲν σελήνης ληγούσης, αὔξεσθαι δὲ ἀκμαζούσης ⟨...⟩ εἰ μὲν περὶ πανσέληνον ἐξαιρεθείη, τὴν μὲν γόνιμον ἀρχὴν ἔτι φυλάττει καὶ αὖθις βλαστάνει κατὰ τὴν προσήκουσαν ὥραν, εἰ δὲ φθινούσης, ἄγονον γίνεται.
>
> Everybody says, too, that the eyes of cats and the entrails of mice contract as the moon wanes, and increase as it grows to full moon. If ⟨...⟩ should be taken

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[24] Dam., *Isid.* = Phot., Bibl. cod. 242, p. 343a (= cod. 181, 242): Τὰς δώδεκα ὥρας ἡ αἴλουρος διακρίνει, νύκτας καὶ ἡμέρας οὐροῦσα καθ' ἑκάστην ἀεί, δίκην ὀργάνου τινὸς ὡρογνωμονοῦσα. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς σελήνης, φησίν, ἀπαριθμεῖται τὰ φῶτα τοῖς οἰκείοις γεννήμασι. Καὶ γὰρ τὴν αἴλουρον ζ' μὲν τὸν πρῶτον, ς' δὲ τὸν δεύτερον τόκον, τὸν τρίτον ε', καὶ δ' τὸν τέταρτον, καὶ γ' τὸν πέμπτον, ἐφ' οἷς δύο τὸν ἕκτον καὶ ἕνα ἐπὶ πᾶσι τὸν ἕβδομον· καὶ εἶναι τοσαῦτα γεννήματα τῆς αἰλούρου, ὅσα καὶ τὰ τῆς σελήνης φῶτα.

[25] Demetr., *Eloc.* 157–158: Πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ προσπλάσσομεν προσφόρους καὶ οἰκείους τοῖς πράγμασιν, ὥς πέρ τις περὶ αἰλούρου λέγων, ὅτι συμφθίνει τῇ σελήνῃ καὶ ὁ αἴλουρος καὶ συμπαχύνεται, προσέπλασεν, ὅτι ἔνθεν καὶ ὁ μῦθός ἐστιν, ὡς ἡ σελήνη ἔτεκεν τὸν αἴλουρον· οὐ γὰρ μόνον κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν πλάσιν ἔσται ἡ χάρις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ μῦθος ἐμφαίνει χάριέν τι, αἰέλουρον ποιῶν σελήνης παῖδα.

[26] Michael Glycas (p. 88 Bonnensis) attributes all these influences to the meteorological influences of the moon and refers to Anastasius' *Hexaemeron*; furthermore he provides another example of a similar change affecting the eyes of a species of monkeys, that widen with the waxing moon and become smaller with the waning: ὁ δὲ κέρκωψ προδηλοτέρας ἔχει τὰς ἐνεργείας· ὅτε γὰρ αὔξει ἡ σελήνη, ὁ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν κύκλος τούτῳ εὑρύνεται, ὅτε δὲ μειοῦται, συστέλλεται.

[27] Transl. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, V, 151.

> up at the full moon it still retains its principle of growth and sprouts again at the proper season, but if taken up when the moon is waning, it is sterile.[28]

In this case, fortunately, it is possible to complete Plutarch's evidence with the testimony of the paradoxographer Antigonus of Carystus,[29] Pliny,[30] Aulus Gellius,[31] Horapollo[32] and John Lydus.[33] In fact, Plutarch's sources could have been Antigonus or Archelaus Chersonites (probably like Antigonus also a 3rd c. BC author[34]), whose works he used in his *Life of Cimon* (4). The more precise character of Antigonus' notice makes him a more probable source, since, as we know from Lydus, Archelaus fixed in fifteen the total number of lobules that mice's livers achieved with the full moon (and from this point they decrease till they disappear completely with the new moon). Also the terminology suggests that Antigonus was the source, since Plutarch's using the verbes φθίνειν and αὔξεσθαι seems to echo the participles συναυξανόμενά τε καὶ συμφθίνοντα of Antigonus.

On the other hand, Aulus Gellius is not conclusive evidence, as he himself depends almost surely on Plutarch. In any case, and in spite of the singularity of the phenomenon, our author does not disprove this growth and decreasing of the liver of the mice, since the theory was widely held in the scientific literature of the time.[35] In fact Pliny also refers to it and links the

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[28] Transl. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia*, XV, 211.

[29] Antig., *Mirab*. 124a (p. 86 A. Giannini): Καὶ τὰ τῇ σελήνη συναυξανόμενά τε καὶ συμφθίνοντα, οἷον τὰ τῶν μυῶν ἥπατα, ἴδια· λέγεται γὰρ καὶ συμπληροῦσθαι καὶ συμφθίνειν καὶ συναύξεσθαι τῷ μηνί, διὸ καὶ παρὰ πολλοῖς ἐν παροιμίας εἰρῆσθαι μέρει ἐπὶ τῶν θαυμαστῶν τεράτων "μυῶν ἥπατα".

[30] Plin., *HN* XI 196 (see XXIX 59): *murium iocusculis fibrae ad numerum lunae in mense congruere dicuntur totidemque inueniri, quotum lumen eius sit, praeterea bruma increscere.*

[31] Gell., *Noct. Att*. 20.8,4–5: *Cum quaeremus, quae alia item senescente luna tabescerent, 'nonne Lucilium' inquit 'nostrum meministis dicere: luna alit ostrea et implet echinos, muribus fibras et iecur addit? Eadem autem ipsa, quae crescente luna gliscunt, deficiente contra defiunt.*

[32] Horap., *Hieroglyph*. 1.10: πρώτη μὲν αἰλουρόμορφος καὶ ἀκτινωτή, ἥνπερ καὶ ἡλίῳ ἀνέθεσαν διὰ τὸ σύμβολον· φασὶ γὰρ τὸν ἄρρενα αἴλουρον συμμεταβάλλειν τὰς κόρας τοῖς τοῦ ἡλίου δρόμοις· ὑπεκτείνονται μὲν γὰρ κατὰ πρῳΐ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνατολήν, στρογγυλοειδεῖς δὲ γίνονται κατὰ τὸ μέσον τῆς ἡμέρας, ἀμαυρότεραι δὲ φαίνονται δύνειν μέλλοντος τοῦ ἡλίου, ὅθεν καὶ τὸ ἐν Ἡλιουπόλει ξόανον τοῦ θεοῦ αἰλουρόμορφον ὑπάρχει.

[33] Lyd., *Mens*. 3.11: ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἀρχέλαός φησι τὰ τῶν μυῶν ἥπατα λοβοὺς ἔχειν πεντεκαίδεκα, οἵτινες οὐκ ἀθρόοι πάντες ἐγγίνονται, ἀλλ' ἕκαστος καθ'ἡμέραν σεληνιακὴν εἷς ἐπιγινόμενος ἐξ οὐκ ὄντος προστίθεται ἀπὸ τῆς νεομηνίας μέχρι τῆς πανσελήνου, πάλιν δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς πανσελήνου εἷς ἐφ'ἑνὶ καθ'ἡμέραν φθίνων λοβὸς πάντες μέχρι τῆς νεομηνίας ἐκλείπουσι. καὶ αὖθις ἐξ ἐκείνης ἄρχονται γίνεσθαι πρὸς τὴν τῆς σελήνης περίοδον καὶ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῆς ἐκείνης ἡμερῶν καὶ αὐτοὶ γινόμενοι καὶ ἀπογινόμενοι καὶ πληθυνόμενοι καὶ μειούμενοι.

[34] See R. Reitzenstein, "Archelaos 84", *RE* II1 (1895) col. 453.

[35] Sor., *Gynaic*. 1.41,1–2, for example, echoes the same belief to show the influence of the moon on the physiological processes of the human body: ⟨τινὲς⟩ δὲ ⟨τῶν παλαιῶν⟩ καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ

number of lobules to the days of the lunar month, just like Archelaus did, although without further specifications.

A more interesting case that deserves more attention is that of the shrew (μυγαλῆ), the physiology of which is referred to by Plutarch, when dealing with the Egyptians' beliefs about it in *Table Talks* 2, 670B. Plutarch admits that the shrew's liver diminishes with the waning of the moon (ἔτι δὲ μειοῦσθαι τὸ ἧπαρ ἐν τοῖς ἀφανισμοῖς τῆς σελήνης),[36] but that its birth happens, as was also the case of the fifth generation of mice,[37] together with the new moon: τίκτεσθαι δ' αὐτὴν ἐκ μυῶν πέμπτῃ γενεᾷ νουμηνίας οὔσης.[38] It has been pointed out that Plutarch refers here to the shrew or to the *ichneumon*, another small rodent which fed on the eggs of the crocodile. While Teodorsson proposes the second identification, Hani prefers the first one.[39] However, the cult of the shrew certainly is well attested in Egypt and consequently it does not seem necessary to cast doubt on the reference to this mouse. In any case that is not the most important issue for us, but rather the fact that Plutarch establishes a close link between the animal and the moon.

τῶν ἔξωθεν καιροὺς ὥρισαν· ἐπιτήδειον γὰρ εἶναι τὸν καιρὸν πληρουμένης τῆς σελήνης. συμπαθεῖν γὰρ τὰ ἐπίγεια τοῖς μεταρ|σίοις, καὶ ὡς τὰ πλεῖστα τῶν θαλασσίων εὐτροφεῖν μὲν πληρουμένης τῆς σελήνης, ἀτροφεῖν δὲ μειουμένης καὶ τῶν κατοικιδίων μυῶν τοὺς λοβοὺς τοῦ ἥπατος αὔξεσθαι μὲν πληρουμένης τῆς σελήνης, ἐλαττοῦσθαι δὲ μειουμένης, οὕτως καὶ τὰς σπερματικὰς δυνάμεις ἐν ἡμῖν τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις αὔξεσθαι μὲν πληρουμένης τῆς σελήνης, ἐλαττοῦσθαι δὲ μειουμένης. ἔτι δὲ κράτιστον καιρὸν εἶναι πρὸς τὸ γενέσθαι σύλληψιν τὸν ἐαρινόν. The question is recurrent in other texts of mythographical or astrological orientation; see A. Pérez Jiménez, "Prescrizioni astrologiche relative alla prassi religiosa", in G. Sfameni Gasparro (ed.), *Modi di comunicazione tra il divino e l'umano* (Cosenza 2005) 170, n. 56 and, in particular, the text of Hephaestio [III 6.14–15] we comment there (170–171) relating the waxing and waning with the changes experienced by the parts of the entrails governed by the moon: ἐπὰν δὲ ἡ θεὸς εὑρέθη πλήθουσα ἢ μειουμένη τοιούτῳ τρόπῳ εὑρίσκεται ἥ τε δοχὴ καὶ ὁ σπλήν.

[36] Michel Glycas (p. 88 Bonnensis) in the text quoted above (above note 26) attributes this phenomenon to the weasel, maybe because of an erroneous simplification of the name of the animal we find in Plutarch: ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ γαλῆ λειψιφωτούσης τῆς σελήνης ἥπατος λείπεται· αὐξιφωτούσης δὲ πάλιν αὐτῆς τὸ τοιοῦτον αὐτῆς προσεπαύξεται μόριον.

[37] We do not have any other evidence for such a detail (see T. Hopfner, *Der Tierkult der alten Aegypter nach den griechisch-römischen Berichten und den wichtigeren Denkmälern* [Vienna 1913] 33), except that, according to the escoliast of Nicander (816.2), Amyntas considered this animal a son of the mouse and the weasel, definitely owing to a defective etymology: ⟨μυγαλέην τροχιῇσι⟩· ἤγουν Ἀμύντας φησὶ τὴν μυγαλῆν ἐκ μυὸς καὶ γαλῆς γίγνεσθαι. See Teodorsson, *Commentary*, 103.

[38] The relation of this animal with the moon appears in other authors; see Iambl., *Myst.* 5.8: Τὰ δ' αὐτὰ ἄτοπα συμβαίνει καὶ εἴ τινες τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀριθμοὺς ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ κροκοδείλου λαμβάνουσι τὴν ἑξηκοντάδα ὡς οἰκείαν ἡλίῳ, ἢ λόγους φυσικοὺς ὡς τὰς τῶν ζῴων δυνάμεις καὶ ἐνεργείας, οἷον κυνὸς κυνοκεφάλου μυγαλῆς, κοινὰς οὔσας πρὸς σελήνην, …

[39] See Hani, *La religion*, 389–392.

3. *Some Conclusions*

In view of the data and of the discussion of the texts in which Plutarch refers to animals and vegetables influenced by or symbolizing the Sun and the Moon, we cannot agree with Jean Hani's negative interpretation of Plutarch's attitude towards these beliefs, which are almost always related to the Egyptian cult of the animals. Of course (at this point we agree with Boulogne[40]) our author refuted the stories about gods transforming themselves into animals in order to escape the sphere of Seth-Typhon; but at least it seems clear that he partly accepted the symbolic character of animals for some appearances of the Egyptian religion.

To sum up, Boulogne has established a catalogue of nine relative explanations for the role animals played in Egyptian religion: *la mythologie, la psychologie, la politique, la demonologie, l'éthique, le symbolique, l'éthico-symbolique, l'anthropologie* and *la theologie*.[41] We would like to propose increasing them to ten, including astrology among them as well. Astrology, however, should not be understood here in the most restricted sense of the term, namely the science that explains the influences of the stars due to the celestial configurations based on mathematical principles and on mythological religious or philosophical attributions. Rather, we mean astrology in the "mild" meaning pointed out by Ptolemy, i.e. the astro-meteorological principle which makes astrology compatible with Plutarch's scientific thought.

From this perspective, astrology deals with the belief (very deep rooted from Hesiod onwards) that Sun and Moon influence the behavior of animals or determine the physiological modification of their organs. These influences could be reasonably based on the doctrine that took into account the physical properties (dryness and humidity) of the stars. Other purely speculative causes, such as the numerical progression in the number of young a cat gives birth to, seem to go too far for Plutarch. However, we do not share the view of authors like Jean Hani, according to which Plutarch rejected the view that cats' pupils or liver lobules of mice are influenced by the rhythms of growth and diminishing of lunar light or that onions follow the reverse process. In the last analysis these phenomena do not differ that

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[40] J. Boulogne, "Le culte égyptien des animaux vu par Plutarque. Une étiologie égyptienne (*Isis et Osiris*, 71–76, 379D–382C)", in idem (ed.), *Les grecs de l'antiquité et les animaux. Le cas remarquable de Plutarque* (Lille 2005) 199.

[41] Boulogne, "Le culte Egyptien", 199–204.

much from other more acceptable beliefs in the meteorological influence of Sun and Moon that were very usual among peasants. It is, then, in this limited sense in which Plutarch could have given credit to beliefs on astral biology which he clearly considered based on popular experience, and not on superstition.

"CICALATA SUL FASCINO VOLGARMENTE DETTO JETTATURA": PLUTARCH, *QUAESTIO CONVIVALIS* 5.7

Paola Volpe Cacciatore

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas

Virg., *Georg*. 2.490

⟨Jettatore⟩ è chi, segnatamente in quel di Napoli, è creduto portare, con la presenza e le parole, disgrazia ed impaccio: specie di stregone innocente e passivo. Iettatore si nasce come poeta

N. Tommaseo

"Nel Settecento molto ancora si componeva di capitoli berneschi, poemi eroicomici, paradossi accademici, tutta roba che ora si guarda con fastidio; ma la *Cicalata* del Valletta merita forse una menzione nelle nostre storie letterarie di quel secolo, nelle quali, per quel che io ne ho visto, non è menzionata neppur di mero titolo".[1]

This is how Benedetto Croce concludes his review of the operetta *Cicalata in difesa del fascino volgarmente detto iettatura* by Nicola Valletta,[2] Regius Professor of Civil law at the University of Naples. It is from this work, published for the first time in 1787[3] and considered by Croce "il solo di tale argomento (*scil.* the evil eye) che meriti di essere salvato dall'oblio"[4] that I borrow the title for my lecture.

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[1] B. Croce, "La 'Cicalata' di Nicola Valletta", *Quaderni della Critica* 3 (1945) 24. ["In the eighteenth century people are still accustomed to write "capitoli berneschi" or satiric pieces, mock-heroic poems, academic paradoxes, compositions which today are studiously avoided; but the *Cicalata* by Valetta perhaps deserves a mention in our histories of the literature of that century, which, as far as I know, fail even to mention its title". Engl. transl. by the editor LRL.]

[2] Nicola Valletta was born in Arienzo in 1748 and died in Naples in 1814. In his youth he had the opportunity to attend the Library of Carfora (a jurisconsult), which was well-stocked with Classics and works on Philology.

[3] The second edition goes back to 1815: in this paper, we make reference to the Bosco's edition of 1984 simply entitled *La Iettatura*.

[4] Croce, "La 'Cicalata'", 22 ["the only study on such a theme (*scil.* the evil eye) that deserves to be saved from oblivion". Transl. by the editor LRL.]

Valletta—whose work, according to Croce, "s'innalza per l'ordine e la logica che è nella trattazione" [excels through the order and logic of its analysis]—is about the study of such a popular and diffuse belief because, as he states in the preface, "i veri sapienti, che hanno bene inteso il fatto loro, e quello degli altri, han sempremai prestata tutta la fede alla jettatura e nella socievol vita (…) hanno più dei cani, o serpenti, evitati i malefici jettatori".[5] He approaches this investigation in three ways: as a historian, because people have always believed in the evil eye; as a philosopher, because he wants to investigate the motivation behind the evil eye; as a *common* man, because he wants to recognize the signs of the evil eye in order to avoid it.[6] "Superfluo avvertire che questo procedimento, formalmente ineccepibile, non può essere, nel caso al quale egli lo applica, se non giocoso, perché la iettatura è bensì un fatto 'naturale', ma 'naturale-psicologico', da darne la genesi, psicologica, e non già naturale-fisica e cosmologica".[7]

Knowing the cause of things is a duty of those who use the λόγος, states Metrius Florus, considered Plutarch's spokesman in the *Quaestio* 5.7 (680B–682F), affirming, as did Virgil, that *felix qui potuit cognoscere causas* (*Georg*. II 400), but it is certain that many things escape the λόγος, being so wrapped up by doubt.

But "chi cerca in ogni questione la spiegazione razionale elimina il prodigioso da ogni cosa; infatti là dove si arresta la spiegazione causale, comincia il dubbio, cioè la filosofia e così, in un certo senso, quelli che non credono al prodigioso, sopprimono la filosofia".[8] The same concept is stated in the *De fac*. (920B–C):

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[5] N. Valletta, *Cicalata sul fascino volgarmante detto jettatura*, ed. P. Del Bosco (Milan 1984) 2 ["The truly wise, knowing both their own business and that of the others, have always given credence to the *jettatura* and, in social life, have avoided evil *jettatori* more than dogs and serpents". Transl. by the editor LRL.]

[6] Valletta, *Cicalata*, 3: "Felice me, se mi riuscisse di persuadervi di una verità, della quale vengo, con poche chiacchiere a squarciare il denso velo": ["I would deem myself happy, if I were to succeed in convincing you of a truth, from which, with a few easy words, I am going to remove the thick veil". Transl. by the editor LRL.]

[7] Croce, *La 'Cicalata'*, 23. ["It is unnecessary to point out that this method, even if unexceptionable from a formal perspective, can in the present case only be metaphorical, because the *jettatura* may be described as a 'natural' fact, if a 'natural-psychological' one, given that its origin is psychological and not natural-physiological or cosmological". Transl. by the editor LRL.]

[8] See D. Babut, *Plutarco e lo stoicismo* (Milan 2003) 314 ["he who always looks for the rational explanation by the same token eliminates the prodigious from everything; indeed, at the point where causal explanation stops, doubt, which is philosophy, begins; and thus, those who do not believe in the prodigious, in a manner suppress philosophy also". Trans. by the editor LRL].

> ὡς γὰρ οἱ ἐν νοσήμασι χρονίοις πρὸς τὰ κοινὰ βοηθήματα καὶ τὰς συνήθεις διαίτας ἀπειπόντες ἐπὶ καθαρμοὺς καὶ περίαπτα καὶ ὀνείρους τρέπονται, οὕτως ἀναγκαῖον ἐν δυσθεωρήτοις καὶ ἀπόροις σκέψεσιν, ὅταν οἱ κοινοὶ καὶ ἔνδοξοι καὶ συνήθεις λόγοι μὴ πείθωσι, πειρᾶσθαι τῶν ἀτοπωτέρων καὶ μὴ καταφρονεῖν ἀλλ' ἐπᾴδειν ἀτεχνῶς ἑαυτοῖς τὰ τῶν παλαιῶν καὶ διὰ πάντων τἀληθὲς ἐξελέγχειν.
>
> ... as people with chronic diseases, when they have despaired of ordinary remedies and customary regimens turn to expiations and amulets and dreams, just so in obscure and perplexing speculations, when the ordinary and reputable and customary accounts are not persuasive, it is necessary to try those that are more out of the way and not scorn them but literally to chant over ourselves the charms of the ancients and use every means of bringing the truth to test.[9]

But what is the etymology of words such as *fascinum* and βασκάνω? It is uncertain: some scholars state that the word *fascinum* derives from *fasciis*, i.e. those tricolored bands that were used to move the spell away;[10] others trace its derivation from the word *fando*, i.e. *incantando*;[11] others yet again derive it from the Greek word βασκαίνω, from which βάσκανος, as we are reminded by Cloatius Verus (*fr.* 4 Funaioli): (...) *item* ⟨*scripsit*⟩ *fascinum appellatum quasi bascanum et fascinare esse quasi bascinare*.[12]

Whatever the exact origin of the word may be, it is notable that people have always believed in the evil eye and in the possibility of being jinxed. By way of an example, Valletta tells how even St. Paul believed in the evil eye, as we can easily find in Galatians 3.1 (*O insensati Galatae, quis vos fascinavit non obedire veritati*).[13]

However, there is a way to escape it and this would be *veretrum* (*fascinum* is, in fact, also the virile member: cf. Hor., *Epod.* 8.18 *Minusve languet*

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[9] Translation by W.C. Helmbold in H. Cherniss & W.C. Helmbold (eds), *Plutarch's Moralia*, XII (London–Cambridge 1957).

[10] About this, see Virgil, *Ecl.* 8.73–74: *Terna tibi haec primum triplici diversa colore / licia circumdo ...*; vv. 76–77: *Necte tribus nodis ternos, Amarylli colores; / Necte, Amarylli, modo; et, Veneris, dic, vincula necto*, and Petronio, *Satyr.* 131: *Illa de sinu licium protulit varii coloris filis intortum, cervicemque vinxit meam: mox turbatum sputo pulverem medio sustulit digito, frontemque repugnantis signavit: hoc peracto carmine, ter me jussit expuere, terque lapillos conjicere in sinum, quos ipsa praecantatos purpura involuerat, admotisque manibus temptare coepit inguinum vires.*

[11] In *Ecl.* 8.71, Virgil writes: *frigidus in prato cantando rumpitur anguis*, where *canto* has the same meaning of *incanto*. About this, please make reference to Plin., *HN* 18.17 and Hor., *Serm.* 1.8.49.

[12] On the value of the word βασκανίη see P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1983) 167.

[13] It is true, however, that St. Jerome, *Comm. in epist. ad Galat.* 7.417, comments on Paul's assertion *non quod scierit, esse fascinum, qui vulgo putatur nocere, sed usus sermone sit trivii.*

fascinum), i.e. προβασκάντιον which would often be hung around the neck of young children,[14] or placed on blacksmiths' doors or in vegetable gardens protected by Venus (Plin., *HN* 19.4), or again worn by women.[15]

Indeed, it was a ritual among ancient Romans to let brides sit upon the image of Priapus. Ancient civilizations, therefore, believed in the evil eye:[16] Greeks and Romans in their *The Law of the Twelve Tables*[17] devoted two articles against this "disease".[18] How can one forget Catullus, who invited everyone in *Carmen* 7 to confuse the number of kisses so that (…) *nec pernumerare curiosi / Possint, nec mala fascinare lingua* (vv. 11–12)? It is interesting to recall Scagliero's note to this passage: *Itaque laudantes, aut numerantes dicebant praefiscini: hoc verbo omnem invidiam se amoliri putabant: ut quum in culleum primam urnam vini indidissent, dicebant multa: nam multum non est numerus praefinitus*.[19]

Among the Greeks, Plutarch debates the theme of βασκανία in the seventh *Quaestio* from Book 5 of *Table Talk*, where he states that it is necessary to investigate *why* and *when* this happens. The evil eye—says the philosopher—strikes children even with a single look, because of their weak and moist nature: "we know, for instance, of persons who seriously hurt children by looking at them, influencing and impairing their susceptible, vulnerable constitutions, but who are less able to affect in this way the firm and established health of older persons" (680D).[20] Such a view is demonstrated

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[14] About this Valletta refers to Varro, *de LL* 6, but his reference is probably derived from the *Forcellini Lexicon*, *s.v. fascinum*, where we read *Pueris figura veretri pro amuleto de collo suspendebatur*.

[15] See also Phaedr., *Fab*. 4.15 (*a fictione veretri linguam mulieris*) and Suet., *Tib*. 62.2 (*Excogitaverat autem inter genera cruciatus etiam, ut larga meri potione per fallaciam oneratos, repente veretris deligatis, fidicularum simul urinaeque tormento distenderet*).

[16] Gell., *Noct. Att*. 9.4.7, testifies how ancient the evil eye belief is: *esse quasdam in terra Africa hominum familias voce atque lingua effascinantium, qui si impensius forte laudaverint pulchras arbores, segetes laetiores, infantes amoeniores, egregios equos, pecudes pastu, atque cultu, opimas emoriantur repente haec omnia nulli aliae causae obnoxia*.

[17] Plin., *HN* 28.2. Hence, E. Forcellini, *Lexicon of the Latin Language* (Boston 1853) s.v. *fascinus*: *Dei nomen apud veteres qui nihil aliud fuit quam veretrum de quo sic Plin. 28.4,7 Religione mutatur et Fascinus imperatorum quoque, non solum infantium, custos, qui Deus inter sacra Romana a Vestalibus colitur et currus triumphantium sub his pendens defendit medicus invidiae* etc.

[18] The first one establishes the punishment for "Those who have incanted an evil song" (*Qui malum carmen incantassit*), the second, instead, for "Someone who kills crops with a spell, or another's corn" (*Qui fruges excantassit … neve alienam segetem pellexeris*). See Tib. 1.9 and Serv. *ad* Virg., *Ecl.* 8.99 (*atque satas alio vidi traducere messes*).

[19] I. Scaligero, *Castigationes in Catullum, Tibullum, Propertium, in Catulli, Tibulli, Propertii* (Genoa 1622) 17.

[20] The translation of this and the following passages quoted from *Quaestio* 5.7, is by P.A. Clement in P.A. Clement & H.B. Hoffleit (eds), *Plutarch's Moralia*, VIII (London–Cambridge 1969).

by Philarchus:[21] "And yet the so-called Thibeans, who in ancient times lived near the Pontus, were, according to Philarchus, deadly not only to children but to adults" (ibid.), and this happened only by breathing the same air and listening to what they said.

The reference to a contagious disease causing sickness is evident, just as is the case with those birds which, becoming infected when brought in contact with the wings of the eagle, lose their feathers also in this case because of moistness (*Qu. conv*. 680E):

> καὶ καθάπερτὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὀρνέων πτερὰ τοῖς τοῦ ἀετοῦ συντεθέντα διόλλυται ψηχόμενα καὶ ἀπανθεῖ τῶν πτίλων μυδώντων, οὕτως οὐδὲν ἀπέχει καὶ ἀνθρώπου ψαῦσιν τὴν μὲν ὠφέλιμον εἶναι τὴν δ' ἀπηνῆ καὶ βλαβεράν·
>
> When the feathers of other birds are put together with those of eagles, they rub against them and are destroyed through putrefaction. Just so, there is no reason to doubt that contact between human beings may prove in some cases beneficial and in others rough and harmful.[22]

Moistness is, therefore, the primary cause[23] of the exhalation that humans breathe out through their warmth and any other movement of their body:[24]

> καὶ γὰρ ἡ ὀσμὴ καὶ ἡ φωνὴ καὶ τὸ ῥεῦμα τῆς ἀναπνοῆς ἀποφοραί τινές εἰσι τῶν ζῴων καὶμέρη κινοῦντα τὰς αἰσθήσεις, ὅταν ὑπ' αὐτῶν προσπεσόντων πάθωσι.[25]
>
> … odour, voice, and breathing are all emanations of same kind, streams of particles from living bodies, that produce sensation whenever our organs of sense are stimulated by their impact.

But the main medium is above all the *eyes* (μάλιστα δὲ τοῦτο γίνεσθαι διὰ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν εἰκός ἐστι: 681A) which, precisely thanks to their mobility, receive and transmit sensations of pleasure and pain. Hence, a central Plutarchean theme is here introduced. According to the philosopher, in fact, eyes reveal pain, passion and love. This is described in *Mulierum virtutes* 243E–245C, where the reference to the eyes as a privileged form of knowledge (derived from Plato, *Phdr*. 250D: ὄψις γὰρ ὀξυτάτη τῶν διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἔρχεται αἰσθήσεως) is constant.[26] It is the eyes, more than the sense of touch and hearing, that

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[21] The passage of Philarchus is quoted by Plutarch in *Them*. 32.4. and *Cam*. 19.4.

[22] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 680E. See Plin., *HN* 10.15; Ael., *NA* 9.2; Arist., [*Pr.*] 3.46.

[23] Empedocles' doctrine is remembered in Pl., *Men*. 76C. See also Plu., *Qu. nat*. 916C–D and *Qu. plat*. 1005B–D.

[24] On the doctrine of exhalations, see Empedocles B 89 DK and Thphr., *Sens*. 7 (= DK 31 A 86).

[25] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 680F.

[26] See R. Scannapieco, "'Voi che per li occhi mi passaste 'l core …': parola e immagini nell'*Amatorius* di Plutarco", in P. Volpe Cacciatore & F. Ferrari (eds), *Plutarco e la cultura della sua età* (Naples 2007) 125–170 at 129.

provoke that sense of pleasure mixed with pain,[27] because it is the eyes and the eyes only that give rise to passion,[28] but this same passion can have a positive influence on some men, and a negative one on some others.

And what to say about somebody affected by yellow jaundice disease, who cures himself by looking at the caladrius bird[29] (ἐμβλέποντες γὰρ τῷ χαραδριῷ θεραπεύονται: 681C)?: "the nature and bodily temperament of this bird is apparently such that it draws out and takes to itself the affliction, which passes like a stream through the eyes of the patient". In a sense, the bird "absorbs" the sickness of the person infected. Hence its habit of keeping its eyes closed in order to defend itself from the infection, since sight has the power to provoke passions—οὕτω δύναμιν ἔχει ὀξεῖαν … ἐνδοῦναι καὶ προσβαλεῖν ἑτέρῳ πάθους ἀρχήν (681D). On this peculiar ability of the eyes, we can further refer to Virgil, *Ecl.* 3.102–103 (*His certe neque amor causa est, vix ossibus haerent: / Nescio quis teneros oculis mihi fascinat agnos*), and to Ovid, *Am.* 1.8.15–16 (*Oculis quoque pupula duplex / Fulminat, et geminum lumen in orbe manet*). But the evil eye is spread not only through sight: one sort of jinx can also be spread through the tongue, and there is another which is spread by physical contact or touch. Once again we may refer to Ovid, *Met.* 14.414–415 (*cuius ab attactu variarum monstra ferarum / In iuvenes veniunt; nulli sua mansit imago*).

"You are indeed right … so far as the physiological effects go", interrupts Patroclea, who adds that τὸ βασκαίνειν concerns the soul as well. Here is to be resumed the question that Plutarch discusses extensively in fragments 1–2 Tyrwhitt, where he wonders whether the affections are diseases of the body or of the soul.[30] In the *Quaestio* the answer is entrusted to a rhetorical question (681D: Οὐκ οἶσθ' (…) ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ τὸ σῶμα συνδιαιτίσθην;), since it is evident that the body, i.e. the face, is nothing but the physical image of

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[27] Γλυκύπικρος is a poetic term, used for example by Sapph. (fr. 130.2), *AP* 5.134.4 (Posidipp.) and 12.109.3 (Mel.).

[28] See Plu., fr. 138 Sandbach: "Dall'opera *Sull'amore* di Plutarco: 'Guardare i belli dà un enorme piacere, ma toccarli e stringerli non è cosa che non comporti pericolo. Soprattutto, come dice Senofonte, il fuoco brucia solo chi lo tocca, ma i belli infiammano anche quelli che si trovano lontano. É la vista, infatti, che fa nascere questa passione'" (translation by R. Scannapieco in Volpe Cacciatore, *I Frammenti*). The beautiful people are compared to the naphta which is so sensitive to fire that it ignites even before being brought in contact with the flame. See Plu., *Alex.* 35.

[29] See Suid., s.v. Χαραδριός. See also schol. ad Pl., *Grg.* 494 B; Ael., *NA* 17.13, Plin., *HN* 30.94. The caladrius is a water fowl, which excretes while eating.

[30] On the first of these fragments, please allow me to refer to Volpe Cacciatore, *I Frammenti*.

what happens in our soul,[31] and indeed it is the affections of the soul that make the body stronger and more powerful.[32] But can the man hit by the evil eye really defend himself? Yes, he can. And it is for this reason that we use the προσβασκανία which, with their weird aspect, catch the attention of the person who casts such a look, thus diverting his evil eye (682A).

These are Patrocleas' remarks.[33] Soclarus' observations, however, focus the attention on the fact that the evil eye comes not only from enemies and malevolent people, but often from our close friends or indeed from our family members, who may also have ὀφθαλμὸν βάσκανον. And what about the evil eye that the young Eutelidas casts upon himself, to the point of becoming sick?

> καλαὶ μέν ποτ' ἔσαν, καλαὶ φόβαι Εὐτελίδαο
> ἀλλ'αὐτὸν βάσκαινεν ἰδὼν ὀλοφώιος ἀνὴρ
> δίνῃ ἐν ποταμοῦ τὸ δ'αὐτίκα νοῦσος ἀεικής.[34]
>
> Curls once on Eutel's head in order stood;
> But when he viewed his figure in a flood,
> He overlooked himself, and now disease.

The explanation could be this: passions, when they dwell inside the soul for too long, take the form of a *habitus pravus* (ἕξις πονηρά), which is commanded not by the will, but by the natural disposition of the person, and it is mainly because of this disposition that the envious man assumes a hideous behavior towards himself. It is the same natural law that rolls the ball and turns the column. But there could be another explanation offered by Hippocrates, according to which "the excellent health is unsafe" (*Aph*. 1.3), and by Euripides, who sang "He that but now looked jolly, plump, and stout, like a star shot by Jove, is now gone out" (fr. 971 Nauck, ὃ δ' ἄρτι θάλλων σάρκα διοπετὴς ὅπως ἀστὴρ ἀπέσβη, πνεῦμ' ἀφεὶς ἐς αἰθέρα).[35] At this point Gaius, Florus's son in law, cuts in: "Then it seems you make no more reckoning or

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[31] On the subject, see P. Volpe Cacciatore, "Rubor in Seneca e δυσωπία in Plutarco", in C. Schrader – V. Ramón & J. Vela (eds), *Plutarco y la Historia. Actas del V Simposio español sobre Plutarco, Zaragoza 20–22 June 1996* (Zaragoza 1997) 489–496.

[32] Plutarch makes a comparison with rabid dogs, whose bites are so dangerous because caused by the disease.

[33] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 682A: Αὗταί σοι, εἶπον, ὦ Φλῶρε, συμβολαὶ τῆς εὐωχίας ἀπηριθμήσθωσαν. The expression of transition returns also in 664D, 668D, 694B and 694F.

[34] Fragment presumably belonging to Euphorion (I.U. Powell, *Collect. Alex*. 58 = F. Scheidweiler, Euph. fr. 185). Eutelidas is to be compared to Narcissus: see Ov., *Met*. 3.407.

[35] See also Plu., *Non poss*. 1090B–C; Theoc. 6.34: Polyphemus, thinking he was truly beautiful and looking at himself in the sea, spits on his own chest three times to avoid the evil eye.

account of Democritus's images, than of those of Aegium or Megara" (τῶν δὲ Δημοκρίτου -ἔφη- εἰδώλων ὥσπερ Αἰγιέων ἢ Μεγαρέων, ἀριθμὸς οὐδεὶς οὐδὲ λόγος).

Among Democritus's idols some are beneficient and some maleficient (ἀγαθοποιά and κακοποιά), some are great (ὑπερφυῆ) and very hard to corrupt (δύσφθαρτα), but not incorruptible (ἄφθαρτα).[36] Coming from envious eyes, they have sense (αἴσθησις) and force (ὁρμή), and they are full of wickedness and iniquity to the point of causing turmoil and damage to the body of those who are victims of such "evil eye". From this, it seems that we can state that the evil brought by the *eidolon* is not exactly a possible announcement regarding the future of those who are struck by the evil eye, but a turmoil produced by the *eidolon* itself as a "double" of its evil sender.[37]

But others will want to discuss *eidola*; here, I want only to refer to *Qu. conv*. 735A, where Plutarch affirms that the *eidola* ἐγκαταβυσσοῦσθαι διὰ τῶν πόρων,[38] i.e. that they "collapse" within the body and then, being carried upward (ἐπαναφερόμενα), they produce the dreams (τάς κατὰ ὕπνον ὄψεις): it is, indeed, the itinerary through which the *eidola* resurface from the bottom of the body.[39] Thus results a suffering βασκανία, of which the cause can be recognized, and a more obscure βασκανία, the origin of which should be attributed to "occult qualities and influences".

But this is a different argument and it is not introduced to generate fear of our own dreams! What has to be said though, last of all, is that once again Plutarch tries to maintain equidistance between faith and reason, to find "le juste milieu entre la crédulité naïve, qui fait prendre le moindre fait insolite pour un signe, et a vite fait de sombrer dans la superstition, et, de l'autre côté, l'étroitesse rationaliste, qui récuse tout ce dont elle ne peut rendre compte".[40]

Generally, as a character from the *Quaestio* states, we need to distinguish between "the impossible and the unusual, between the absurd and the unexpected, in order to avoid believing everything, and also, inversely,

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[36] These features make us think about the δαίμονες. About this see M. Detienne, *De la pensée religieuse à la pensée philosophique. La notion de Daimon dans le pythagorisme ancien* (Paris 1963) 152. This quotation is from Plu., *Aem*. 1.4 and it is attested in Democritus B 166 (by S.E., *M*. 9.19). See also Cic., *Div*. 1.43.120 (= Democritus A 74).

[37] G. Cambiano, "Democrito e i sogni", in id., *Figure, macchine, sogni. Saggi sulla scienza antica* (Rome 2006) 230.

[38] The verb ἐγκαταβυσσοῦσθαι is constructed from βυσσός (see Chantraine, *Dictionnaire*, 201).

[39] Cambiano, *Democrito*, 223.

[40] D. Babut, *Plutarque et le Stoicisme*, (Paris 1969) 517.

falling in systematic scepticism".[41] Maybe this statement is not too far—*si parva licet componere magnis*—from Benedetto Croce's "non è vero ma prendo le mie precauzioni" ["is not true, but I take my precautions"], or from the view of a well-loved representative of the Neapolitan theatre, Eduardo De Filippo: "essere superstiziosi è da ignoranti ma non esserlo porta male" ["to be superstitious is typical of the ignorant, but not to be so may bring one misfortune"].

But I want to finish my short note with some verses of a small poem on the evil eye written by Cataldo Carducci, recalled by Valletta and Croce in the aforementioned review: "Non suoni altro jettatura che malia, fulmin, contagio/ un malanno, una sciagura/ Tal si noma or per adagio/ che con lei va tutto insieme/ il peggior ch'uom fugge, o teme (…)", and with the description of hoodoos given by Pirandello in the famous Novel *La Patente* ("Il Chiàrchiaro s'era combinata una faccia da iettatore, ch'era una meraviglia a vedere. S'era lasciata crescere su le cave gote gialle una barbaccia ispida e cespugliata; si era insellato sul naso un paio di grossi occhiali cerchiati d'osso, che gli davano l'aspetto d'un barbagianni; aveva poi indossato un abito lustro, sorcigno, che gli sgonfiava da tutte le parti"), and by Gozzano in *Un voto alla dea Tharata-ku-wha* ("quel detestabile signore dal naso ricurvo: uno iettatore certo, dacché tutte le cose mi andavano a rovescio quando l'incontravo, e l'incontravo sovente in tram, in ferrovia, a teatro").

[41] Ibid. [Engl. tranls. by the editor LRL.]

THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES AND POLITICAL TIMING IN THE *LIFE OF ALCIBIADES*

Delfim F. Leão

1. *Alcibiades and the Scandals of 415 BC*

Among modern scholars and readers of Plato, Socrates' trial is usually considered to be the most important case of religious impiety (*asebeia*) and, according to the sources, it was also the most widely discussed, already in antiquity. Nevertheless, that perspective is mainly due to Plato's influence and to his success in presenting his master as a kind of martyr of philosophical thinking. Conversely, for the average Athenian of the end of the fifth century, the serious events that occurred in the days before the expedition against Sicily must have had a much greater impact, once they inspired a feeling of collective fear, which would be converted into an intense "witch hunt", i.e. into a restless search for information which might lead to the presumptive authors of such provocative actions. The importance of these events, whose effects would be felt in Athenian society for years, is well known, wherefore this paper will not aim at analyzing the subject in detail once again, except for evoking the historical context that underlined the involvement of Alcibiades—the most emblematic politician of the time—in the scandals of that moment.[1] The scandals comprised a double crime of *asebeia*: the mutilation of the Herms and the parody of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Nonetheless, only the first was intended to have public visibility, since the evidence points to the idea that the parody of the Mysteries was designed primarily to remain secret and in the private sphere. Probably it was the anxiety raised by the need of finding the culprits for the

[1] For a more detailed analysis of this problem, see D.F. Leão, "Matéria religiosa: processos de impiedade (*asebeia*)", in D.F. Leão at el. (eds), *Nomos. Direito e sociedade na Antiguidade Clássica / Derecho y sociedad en la Antigüedad Clásica* (Coimbra–Madrid 2004) 201–226. The main arguments presented there are partially recovered in this paper. I want to thank Ana Balula and Manuel Tröster, who read an earlier version of this paper and whose comments helped me to improve it, especially at the linguistic level.

mutilation of the Herms that led to the disclosure of other *asebemata*. On the other hand, Alcibiades' connection to the Mysteries' case not only potentiated the global dimension of the scandal, as it also made him suspicious of being involved in the disregard for the Herms, even though he was probably innocent regarding the second accusation. Finally, because the crimes occurred just before the expedition to Sicily, the consequence was that the political "timing" would also hurt Alcibiades' defense.

2. *The Mutilation of the Herms*

In its most elaborate representation, the statues that depicted Hermes' image consisted of a quadrangular column, adorned with a big phallus in the center and with an image of the god's head on top. It is over these pillars that a group of unknown people would exert their violence, an act that, according to Thucydides (6.27.1–2), provoked astonishment and indignation among their contemporaries. The first clues indicated that the sacrilege had been committed in an orchestrated way, since the transgression, although with a wide range, had occurred in one single night. Thucydides mentions that the pillars were mutilated only in the face, but Aristophanes underlines that the phallus was also attacked.[2] Thucydides also relates that it affected "most" (οἱ πλεῖστοι) of the Herms; yet, Andocides (1.62) says that all of them were mutilated, with the exception of the one next to the house of his own father, the one that was meant for him. It is not unlikely, though, that the orator's words are somehow exaggerated, to facilitate Andocides' defense, since he had been the only one that did not follow the instructions apparently agreed to by his former accomplices. Consequently, Thucydides' version seems to be the most accurate, and this must be the reason why Plutarch also uses his presentation of the episode as guideline, in the biography of Alcibiades:[3]

> ἡ μέντοι τῶν Ἑρμῶν περικοπή, μιᾷ νυκτὶ τῶν πλείστων ἀκρωτηριασθέντων τὰ πρόσωπα, πολλοὺς καὶ τῶν περιφρονούντων τὰ τοιαῦτα διετάραξεν.[4]

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[2] Ar., *Lys.* 1093–1094. In this passage, the playwright uses the expression *Hermokopidai* ("mutilators of the Herms") to name the people responsible for the aggression against the statues of the god.

[3] However, Plutarch seems to endorse Andocides' declarations in a different context (*Nic.* 13.3). For more details on this, see D.M. MacDowell, *Andokides. On the Mysteries* (Oxford 1962) 103; Leão, "Matéria religiosa", 220–224.

[4] Plu., *Alc.* 18.6.

> Then there was the mutilation of the herms, when in the course of a single night every herm had its facial extremities broken off; this disturbed a great many people, even if they were normally inclined to be indifferent to such things.[5]

> ἐν γὰρ ὀλίγοις πάνυ τῶν ἐπιφανῶν μόνος σχεδὸν ἀκέραιος ἔμεινε· διὸ καὶ νῦν Ἀνδοκίδου καλεῖται, καὶ πάντες οὕτως ὀνομάζουσι, τῆς ἐπιγραφῆς ἀντιμαρτυρούσης.[6]

> [The tall herm …] was almost the only one of the few really conspicuous statues to remain unharmed. That is why to this day it is known as the Herm of Andocides, which is the name everyone gives it, despite the contradictory evidence of the inscription it bears.

The nature of the impious act under discussion is quite clear, wherefore the mutilation of the Hermes statues represented a direct expression of disrespect to the god, whose wrath could thereby affect the whole society. The Athenians took this act of insolence very seriously, and because of that a quick and vigorous reaction was called for, as can be seen in the aforementioned testimony of Thucydides (6.27.1–2). Actually, the special mechanism of *menysis* ("providing information") was activated, giving any person (*ho boulomenos*) the right to supply information that might lead to the identification and arrest of the authors of the crime.[7] Thucydides even suggests that the authorities aimed at encouraging denunciation on the part of possible accomplices, since the decree guaranteed *adeia* ("impunity") to the informants. The *adeia* should not prevail in any circumstances, but only if the information proved to be true; otherwise, its author would be punished with death.[8] This accountability, required by the *menysis*, is related to the gravity of the crime that motivated it, once, as the historian clarifies, the one indicted of *asebeia* faced the risk of the death penalty. Thucydides also mentions additional measures that are corroborated by the remaining sources.

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[5] All the English translations are taken from R. Waterfield, *Plutarch Greek Lives* (Oxford 1998).

[6] Plu., *Alc*. 21.3.

[7] The most comprehensive source concerning the enactment of a *menysis* procedure is precisely Andocides' speech *On the Mysteries*. Demosthenes (24.11), Dinarchus (1.95) and Plutarch (*Per*. 31.2) provide other instances of *menysis*, even if not adding anything new from a legal perspective. On the characteristics of this mechanism, see D.M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (London 1978) 181–183.

[8] As can be deduced from And. 1.20, who had to live with the consequences of having denounced not only the accomplices, but also his own father. The justification for this decision (as well as the denial of having denounced the father) occupies a good deal of his defense, by the time when he presented the speech *On the Mysteries* (see 1.48–60). See also Plu., *Alc*. 21.4–6.

In fact, in order to guarantee that the guilty would be handed over to justice, a team of investigators (*zetetai*) was created and a reward was established for those that might provide information that would lead to the imprisonment of those responsible for the sacrilege.[9] As a consequence of this effort to get valid information, the name of Alcibiades became associated not only with this crime, but also with another one involving the Eleusinian Mysteries, as Plutarch himself states:

> Ἐν δὲ τούτῳ δούλους τινὰς καὶ μετοίκους προήγαγεν Ἀνδροκλῆς ὁ δημαγωγός, ἄλλων τ' ἀγαλμάτων περικοπὰς καὶ μυστηρίων παρ' οἶνον ἀπομιμήσεις τοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου καὶ τῶν φίλων κατηγοροῦντας. […] ταῦτα γὰρ ἐν τῇ εἰσαγγελίᾳ γέγραπται Θεσσαλοῦ τοῦ Κίμωνος, εἰσαγγείλαντος Ἀλκιβιάδην ἀσεβεῖν περὶ τὼ θεώ.[10]
>
> Meanwhile, the popular leader Androcles produced some slaves and resident aliens who accused Alcibiades and a group of his friends of mutilating other statues, and of parodying the Mysteries when drunk. […] These were the charges contained in the impeachment brought by Thessalus the son of Cimon, which accused Alcibiades of impiety towards the two goddesses.

This association between both sacrileges can be found in the sources as well as in the discussions of modern scholars. Nevertheless, there are enough indications suggesting that, at the beginning, these events were independent and even that, after a first moment of political exploitation, they must have resulted in two separate trials. In fact, the elements provided by the informants revealed that there had been other mutilations of statues and, most important, they unveiled a second scandal, which dealt with the profane celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries in private houses. Alcibiades was directly implicated in this second sacrilege and his involvement turned out to be a determining factor in strengthening the general public indignation towards the crimes of *asebeia*.

Bearing in mind these assumptions, it is now time to discuss the possible motivations behind the behavior of the *Hermokopidai*. The informants disclosed former mutilations, thus showing that this act of vandalism was not an isolated instance of this kind of disorder. Moreover, Thucydides (6.28.1: μετὰ παιδιᾶς καὶ οἴνου) as well as Plutarch (*Alc*. 19.1: παρ' οἶνον) are both inclined to accept an explanation that has nothing to do with the possibility of a political conspiracy: they believe that the mutilation of the Herms was just a bad-taste joke, motivated by a night of wine and excesses. Although

[9] See And. 1.14; 1.27; 1.40.
[10] Plu., *Alc*. 19.1–3.

simple, this justification is quite admissible. In fact, even nowadays it is not unusual to detect the effects of the same kind of night disorder in cities marked by a concentration of students, as happens e.g. at the University of Coimbra. Throughout the year (especially during the academic celebrations), there are small acts of vandalism against statues and pillars on the streets—curiously the preferred "victim" of the bohemians. It would not be correct to interpret these acts as a special way of protesting and, although they may carry some degree of disturbance and of material losses, they represent nothing more than episodic manifestations of euphoria. Nonetheless, one should also recognize that the correct interpretation of similar acts was not always this linear in the past. For instance, during the students' struggles, by the end of the 1960s, analogous demonstrations of vandalism could and should be seen as means of expressing political dissent and defying the existing regime.

In sum: everything depends on the context of the events, and it is true that the Athenian context around the year 415 BC was quite singular and particularly sensitive. In the first place, the mutilation of statues could be considered a crime of *asebeia* and, as such, be punished with the death penalty; second, the huge dimension and public impact of the sacrilege raised the suspicion that it might have been the result of a premeditated plan; finally, it occurred just before the beginning of an important military enterprise, for which it represented a very bad augury.[11] This way, although the explanation given by Thucydides and Plutarch may be accurate, the political context surrounding these scandals, as well as their huge public visibility, provided credibility to the idea that a conspiracy to overthrow democracy was under way. Alcibiades' political enemies then wisely explored this theory, which seemed quite convincing because he was well known by his unconventional behavior, marked by some tendency towards tyrannical attitudes, often disregarding legal boundaries (*paranomia*).[12]

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[11] On the relation between ominous signs and the Sicilian expedition, see C.A. Powell "Religion and the Sicilian Expedition", *Historia* 28 (1979) 15–31.

[12] See Th. 6.28.1–2; Plu., *Alc.* 16.2; 16.7; 20.4–5. Because the word *nomos* embraces both the idea of constitutional law and of traditional religious regulations, *paranomia* may denote a transgression falling within the realm of those two fields. On this see K. Dover, "Excursus: the Herms and the Mysteries", in A.W. Gomme – A. Andrewes & K.J. Dover: *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, IV: Books V25-VII (Oxford 1970) 264–288 at 285.

3. *Parodic Representation of the Eleusinian Mysteries*

When discussing the problem of the mutilation of the Herms, a first mention was already made of the other great scandal of 415: the parodic celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries, a sacrilege in which Alcibiades was directly involved. As seen in the last section, his rival politicians tried to create the idea, in public opinion, that he was implicated in both scandals, although Thucydides was already aware of the fact that the reality was probably quite different (6.53.1; 6.61.1). Accordingly, the evidence suggests that two independent processes were started and that Alcibiades was called back from Sicily to answer only in the one deriving from the Mysteries issue.[13] Conversely, the tendency to associate an exceptional character with deeds equally spectacular led already to the circumstance that, even in the fourth century, Demosthenes would maintain that Alcibiades "had mutilated the Herms" (21.147), and confusion around this topic made its way into the historiographical tradition, as is clearly illustrated by Diodorus (13.2.3–4; 13.5.1).[14]

Even before considering the possible motivations for this second sacrilege, one should start by pointing out the existence of some fundamental differences between the two cases. The mutilation of the Herms was a crime of a public nature, probably premeditated and, because it was perpetrated at once in only one night, it had much greater impact and visibility. By contrast, the impious celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries occurred in the private domain and, in principle, was not meant to get out of the restrained circle of the persons who had participated in that parodic representation. On the other hand, there are clear hints indicating that those acts were repeated several times and by separate groups of participants, as can be deduced from the fact that the information (*menysis*) on the scandals was provided by different persons and with reference to distinct circumstances.[15] Consequently, it is legitimate to infer from these official denunciations that the sacrilege had been perpetrated four or five times, that

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[13] See F. Graf, "Der Mysterienprozeß", in L. Burckhardt & J. von Ungern-Sternberg (eds), *Große Prozesse im antiken Athen* (Munich 2000) 114–127 at 118–120.

[14] For a presentation of the personalities involved either in both sacrileges or in only one of them (as well as of the people who denounced their involvement), see Dover, "Excursus", 276–280.

[15] For more details on the question, see O. Murray, "The Affair of the Mysteries: Democracy and the Drinking Group", in idem (ed.), *Sympotica. A Symposium on the Symposion* (Oxford 1990) 149–161.

Alcibiades had taken part in two or three of these incidents, and even that he played a leading role in the parody. Even without assuming that other occurrences remained unrevealed, it seems evident that the disrespect for religious practices enjoyed a certain popularity in symposiac contexts and that Alcibiades was not the only one to be blamed for this kind of behavior.

Despite the seriousness of the crime, the political enemies of Alcibiades thought that judging an Athenian general with such a great popularity, in the moment when the fleet was about to leave for Sicily, could seriously diminish the chances of getting a condemnation. They therefore argued that the *kairos* was favorable to the expedition, which should not be delayed by legal procedures (Plu., *Alc*. 19.5). This spirit of abnegation, apparently observed in the interest of the city, was nothing more than a political ambush destined to undermine Alcibiades' credibility and to prepare a stronger attack when he would be absent from Athens and without the support of the soldiers. Alcibiades understood well the maneuvering, but he was not able to convince the Athenians and had to embark with the others, despite the fact that he was leaving behind a distasteful track of accusations.[16] The political "timing" was therefore doubly unfavorable to him: the accusation struck him when his popularity was at its highest point, but instead of helping him, this circumstance was playing against his interests, not only because it increased the dimension of the scandal but also because the urgency of the expedition prevented him from staying in Athens, defending himself at a time when he had good chances of prevailing against his accusers.

The sacrilege under analysis has been described by using terms like "celebration", "representation" and "parody"–words that cannot be properly considered as synonyms. The first applies primarily to the religious domain and can be applied, with legitimacy, to define the cult held in Eleusis; only the last one carries manifestly negative connotations, while "representation" can be understood, in a certain way, as being placed in the middle of the other two. This terminological oscillation has been voluntary until now, in the sense that the exact nature of this act of *asebeia* is not known with certainty.[17] In fact, when mentioning the nature of the sacrilege perpetrated by Alcibiades and other persons, the sources do not refer to it as

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[16] Plu., *Alc*. 19.7.

[17] For a detailed analysis of the whole ritual concerning the way the Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated, see G.E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton 1961); D. Lauenstein, *Die Mysterien von Eleusis* (Stuttgart 1987).

implying specifically a parody, because the verbs used to define the transgression primarily evoke notions of "making" (*poiein*, *gignesthai*) or "representing" (*apomimeisthai*).[18] Accordingly, there seem to be enough reasons to think that it was not an inversion of the ritual, but a sacrilegious "celebration". Its profane character derives from the circumstances that ceremonies typical of the cult were carried out in an inappropriate context (in private houses and not in the sanctuary), by the wrong people (common citizens and not by the official priests of the cult), and by transgressing the secrecy that should be observed in order to protect the Mysteries (among those attending the frivolous celebration, there were non-initiates).[19] The way Plutarch mentions the terms of the accusation is quite significant, in what concerns the religious implications of the misdeed:[20]

> Θεσσαλὸς Κίμωνος Λακιάδης Ἀλκιβιάδην Κλεινίου Σκαμβωνίδην εἰσήγγειλεν ἀδικεῖν περὶ τὼ θεώ, [τὴν Δήμητραν καὶ τὴν Κόρην,] ἀπομιμούμενον τὰ μυστήρια καὶ δεικνύοντα τοῖς αὑτοῦ ἑταίροις ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ, ἔχοντα στολὴν οἵανπερ ὁ ἱεροφάντης ἔχων δεικνύει τὰ ἱερά, καὶ ὀνομάζοντα αὐτὸν μὲν ἱεροφάντην, Πουλυτίωνα δὲ δᾳδοῦχον, κήρυκα δὲ Θεόδωρον Φηγαιᾶ, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους ἑταίρους μύστας προσαγορεύοντα καὶ ἐπόπτας παρὰ τὰ νόμιμα καὶ τὰ καθεστηκότα ὑπό τ' Εὐμολπιδῶν καὶ Κηρύκων καὶ τῶν ἱερέων τῶν ἐξ Ἐλευσῖνος.[21]
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> Thessalus the son of Cimon, of the deme Laciadae, charges Alcibiades the son of Cleinias, of the deme Scambonidae, of crimes against the two goddesses, in that he did parody the Mysteries and make them the subject of a show put on for friends of his in his house, while dressed in garments resembling those the High Priest wears when he shows the sacred objects, and calling himself the High Priest, Poulytion the Torch-bearer, Theodorus of the deme Phegaea the Herald, and the rest of his friends who were there Initiates and Watchers, contrary to the laws and institutions of the Eumolpidae, the Heralds, and the priests of Eleusis.

The terms of the accusation show that this crime of religious impiety (*asebeia*) derived from the performance of a ceremony designed to duplicate the most important moment of the initiation into the Eleusinian Myster-

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[18] See, for example, And. 1.12; 1.16–17; [Lysias], 6.51; Isocr. 16.6; Plu., *Alc*. 19.1.

[19] As may be deduced from the defense of Andocides (1.12; 1.28; 1.29), during the legal procedure, special precautions were taken in order to prevent non-initiates from attending the trial. See Murray, "The Affair of the Mysteries", 155–156; Graf, "Der Mysterienprozeß", 124–125; Leão, "Matéria religiosa", 220–224.

[20] Alcibiades was first object of an *eisangelia* by Pithonicus (see And. 1.14); however, taking into consideration that the Athenians agreed on postponing the judgment until he would come back from Sicily, it would be necessary to start by then a new procedure (probably the charge now brought by Thessalus). See Murray "The Affair of the Mysteries", 154 n. 17.

[21] Plu., *Alc*. 22.4.

ies, but without respecting either the appropriate context and the binding discretion, or the necessary presence of the persons officially habilitated to carry out the ritual. By doing so, they acted in clear contravention of the traditional laws and practices established by the entities responsible for the cult.

It is, now, time to discuss the possible motivations that were behind this religious sacrilege. It has already been pointed out that the Athenians established by then a connection between this impious act and the mutilation of the Herms, and also that they related both sacrileges to a plan to overthrow the democratic regime. As mentioned before, it is unlikely that this was the real motivation. In order to reach this conclusion, it is enough to consider the situation of Alcibiades, probably the personality involved in the episode with a higher public profile. By the time when the scandals became known, he was the most popular public figure of the moment, and the expedition to Sicily represented, principally, the visible expression of his extraordinary capacity to lead the multitude. Therefore, he would not benefit from such a putative plan of overthrowing democracy. It is very plausible, though, that Thucydides (6.28) was right when he underlined the political exploitation of the situation by the enemies of the statesman and also when he connected those events to a manifestation of *hybris*, which, in this context, may be interpreted as "irreverence" and "provocation", in a certain way typical of the lifestyle of the aristocratic youth, dangerously expanded to the point of touching the margins of illegality. The coincidence of these excesses with a delicate period of Athenian history and with the visibility of other careless actions, had a strong impact on public opinion, which led to the inquiries and to the legal processes originated by them.

4. *The Return of Alcibiades to the Athenian Political Scene*

The analysis of the scandals of 415 shows that a crime of *asebeia* of great dimension demanded from the community a strong and efficient reaction, because, otherwise, the community as a whole would face the risk of having to expiate a misdeed that only some had committed. The political use of the sacrileges, in particular as soon as Alcibiades' involvement was unveiled, and the great impact on the morale of the population, help to explain, at least in part, the improvidence or even excess that would characterize the way the democratic regime dealt with the problem.

Actually, by agreeing to embark on the expedition to Sicily, and by condemning then its principal promoter, the popular sovereignty committed

successive mistakes, which would strongly undermine the credibility of its institutions. The *ekklesia*, besides not having listened to Nicias' objections, would elect him, against his own will, as one of the generals in charge of the command of the expedition; on the other hand, the *demos* was at first enthusiastic about Alcibiades' proposals, and then withdrew its support and took him out of Sicily, depriving the fleet of the sole general that could guide the soldiers to victory and endowing the enemies with a precious counselor who would help the Spartans to occupy the fortification of Decelia, in Attic territory, only a few miles away from Athens.[22] Finally, when good sense should have advised to abandon the expedition, the *demos* chose to send reinforcements, thus inflating the clamorous disaster of 413.

Some years after these events, which were largely provoked by Alcibiades' impetuous spirit, he would manage to have an influential return to Athenian politics, taking advantage of the great military successes accomplished by him, which contrasted with the difficult situation that Athens was then facing. Alcibiades was, therefore, able enough to choose the right "timing" for his return. In fact, the Athenians welcomed him with true enthusiasm and spared no efforts in order to give him back the status he had before leaving: they returned him his properties and the Eumolpidae and Kerykes also lifted the curses that had been put on him.[23] It is, however, significant that, at the moment in which his popularity reached a new peak (in 407), he had tried to use his influence to restore the dignity to the Eleusinian cult—as if he was trying to redeem himself from the nefarious consequences of his previous behavior.

In reality, with the occupation of Decelia by the Spartans and their control of the access by land to Eleusis, the sacred *pompe* was now made by sea, in order to guarantee its safety, but lost in consequence a great part of its brightness. Alcibiades therefore decided to escort it by land, protecting it with his troops and getting an effect that was significantly comparable to the highest moment of the Mysteries. This initiative, which was carried out according to the designs of the priests of the sanctuary, enabled Alcibiades to legitimate, up to a certain point, the role of hierophant that he had

[22] Th. 7.19, 27–28.

[23] Plu., *Alc*. 33.3. However, Plutarch (*Alc*. 34.1) himself does not fail to note that the *kairos* that favored Alcibiades' return to Athens coincided nevertheless with some bad omens, which seemed in some way to prepare the path to the disgrace that would affect him soon thereafter. It was as if Athena herself was refusing to welcome Alcibiades' back to the city (*Alc*. 34.2).

usurped a few years before.[24] This diligence could symbolically represent a kind of epilogue to the scandals of the past, thus preparing Alcibiades' final rehabilitation in the eyes of the Athenians, just as Plutarch suggests:

> ὡς δὲ ταῦτ' ἔγνω καὶ προεῖπεν Εὐμολπίδαις καὶ Κήρυξι, σκοποὺς μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν ἄκρων ἐκάθισε καὶ προδρόμους τινὰς ἅμ' ἡμέρᾳ προεξέπεμψεν, ἱερεῖς δὲ καὶ μύστας καὶ μυσταγωγοὺς ἀναλαβὼν καὶ τοῖς ὅπλοις περικαλύψας, ἦγεν ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ μετὰ σιωπῆς, θέαμα σεμνὸν καὶ θεοπρεπὲς τὴν στρατηγίαν ἐκείνην ἐπιδεικνύμενος, ὑπὸ τῶν μὴ φθονούντων ἱεροφαντίαν καὶ μυσταγωγίαν προσαγορευομένην.[25]
>
> Once he had decided to go ahead, he told the Eumolpidae and the Heralds of his plans. At dawn on the day of the procession, he posted lookouts in the hills and sent out an advance guard. Then he mustered the priests, the initiates, and their sponsors, provided them with a protective screen of armed men, and led them out in a calm, silent procession. On this occasion he made the post of military commander which he held such an awesome and majestic spectacle that he was described, by those who did not begrudge him his success, as a high priest and a sponsor of initiates, as much as a military commander.

Alcibiades' return to Athens, as well as that of many other men that had left with him, gave rise to huge expectations. To the emblematic decision of having him escort the *pompe* to Eleusis, other diligences were added, such as the elimination of the exile penalty against him (the stele with the condemnation was even thrown into the sea). As a corollary to all this, Alcibiades was entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the war. Still in the summer of 407, he would leave Athens, heading about a hundred ships, but the campaign did not meet the expected success—precisely because expectations were too high and because the aristocracy and the *demos* did not share the same political goals regarding the former exiled. Alcibiades' careful withdrawal to Thrace, to the bases that he had secured during his stay at the Hellespont, represents a clear sign that he felt that his position in Athens was fragile.[26] A remark made in Aristophanes' *Frogs* illustrates very well the mistrust and the contradictory feelings that this charismatic character inspired in his fellow citizens: he was someone "for whom [the city] longs,

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[24] This was pointed before by S. Verdegem, "On the Road again. Alcibiades' Restoration of the Eleusinian *pompe* in Plu., *Alc.* 34.3–7", in A. Pérez Jiménez & F. Casadesús Bordoy (eds), *Estudios sobre Plutarco: misticismo y religiones mistéricas en la obra de Plutarco* (Madrid 2001) 451–459.

[25] Plu., *Alc.* 34.6.

[26] See A. Andrewes, "The Spartan Resurgence", in D.M. Lewis – J. Boardman – J.K. Davies & M. Ostwald (eds), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, V: *The Fifth Century B.C.* (Cambridge 2006 [1992]) 464–498, 487–488 and 490–495.

whom she hates and yet wants back".[27] In antiquity, it was already broadly believed that Alcibiades wasted, because of his extravagance and ambition, what were exceptional rhetoric and military qualities, which could have made of him a true successor of Pericles.[28] Instead, his impetuous and polemic character garnered him envy and mistrust, precluding him from triumphing until the end.

To sum up: it is quite significant that Alcibiades' political *kairos* or "timing" was twice directly connected to the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries—which thereby underlined two moments of great projection of this figure, although the political and military outcome was, in both cases, adverse to him. In the days before the departure to Sicily, his involvement in the scandals projected even more the impact of those religious crimes that would indelibly stain his promising political career and contribute to the collective disaster of 413. Some years later, after having returned to Athens, the way Alcibiades escorted the *pompe* to Eleusis became once more a visible symbol, as Plutarch vividly points out, of the huge expectations that he had created in the Athenians. Once again, however, they were not fulfilled, thus making him fall, a last time and definitely, in disgrace.

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[27] Ar., *Ra*. 1425: Ποθεῖ μέν, ἐχθαίρει δέ, βούλεται δ' ἔχειν.

[28] M.C. Fialho, "Sócrates e a *paideia* falhada de Alcibíades", in C. Soares – J. Ribeiro Ferreira & M.C. Fialho, *Ética e Paideia em Plutarco* (Coimbra 2008) 31–46, sustains that the benefits of Socratic *paideia* were wasted in Alcibiades.

ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΩΔΗΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ: PLUTARCH'S FR. 157 SANDBACH BETWEEN CULTUAL TRADITIONS AND PHILOSOPHICAL MODELS

Rosario Scannapieco

> Allora la dea rise. Fu una risata squillante e crudele, da ragazzina.
> A quella risata si deve se il mondo fino a oggi non si è disfatto.
>
> (R. Calasso, *Le nozze di Cadmo e Armonia*)

1. *Fr. 157 Sandbach: Fascination of the Ancient, Exegesis, and Defense of the Hellenic Identity*

The fr. 157 Sandbach, transmitted by Eusebius of Caesarea,[1] belongs to the Περὶ τῶν ἐν Πλαταιαῖς Δαιδάλων (*The Daedalian feasts in Plataea*), work n. 201 of the *Lamprias Catalogue*, to which the following fr. 158, also attested to by Eusebius,[2] can be ascribed. The Plutarchean text is mentioned to provide

[1] Eus., *PE* 3.1. 1–6, with E. des Places, *Eusèbe de Césarée, La préparation évangélique* (Paris 1976) 140–151. The text also appears in A. Tresp, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Kultschriftsteller* (New York 1975 [Giessen 1914]) 117–123 and partially, in *FGrHist* F 3b, 388F, fr. 1. On the editions of the fragment, see D. Wyttenbach (ed.), *Plutarchi Chaeronensis Moralia*, V (Oxford 1800) 501–506; F. Dübner (ed.), *Plutarchi Fragmenta et Spuria* (Paris 1855) 17–20 (on the textual notes, see the *Annotatio critica*, VII–VIII) and G.N. Bernardakis, *Plutarchi Chaeronensis Moralia*, VII: *Plutarchi fragmenta vera et spuria multis accessionibus locupletata* (Leipzig 1896) 43–50; with n. 157 it appears in F.H. Sandbach (ed.), *Plutarchi Moralia*, VII (Leipzig 1967) 94–99 and in F.H. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia*, XV: *Fragments* (London–Cambridge 1987) 282–295, with brief philological footnotes to the Greek text, along with the English translation. On further translations of the fragment, see E. Clavier, *Œuvres mèlèes de Plutarque*, VI (Paris 1804) 218–227 (with some footnotes to the text); M. Adriani, *Opuscoli di Plutarco*, II (Naples 1841) 1253–1255; see also my translation of the fragment in P. Volpe Cacciatore (ed.), *Plutarco*, *Frammenti* (Naples 2007 [^{2}2010]) 178–185. The reference text is published in the above-mentioned volume, with a few diverging points from the text established by Sandbach (ed.), *Plutarchi Moralia* and from Sandbach (ed.), *Plutarch's Moralia*; more details on the textual choices will be further described in the footnotes.

[2] Eus., *PE* 3.8.1.

evidence of the philosopher's ease in converting myths into a μυστηριώδης θεολογία, a "theology in form of mysteries" claiming to provide a comprehensive vision of physical and metaphysical reality. However, Eusebius grasps an apparent contradiction in Plutarch's argument, since at first he thinks of Hera as "the marriage between a man and a woman", then he identifies her with the goddess of Earth, and finally with Leto.

Eusebius considered it an impious contradiction,[3] but actually it was a distinctive feature of Plutarch's eclectic approach to the interpretation of myths. By using different kinds of explanation (physical and naturalistic, grammatical and etymological, mystical and religious), he avoided to emphasizing the contradictions between the different readings, yet trying to reconcile them in the name of a balanced syncretism:[4] this matched the trends of the time and the expectations of the class of πεπαιδευμένοι who were his ideal public. Indeed, their rationalistic and basically encyclopedic background, did not exclude a particular attention to religion, along with their aetiological, antiquarian and grammatical interests. All these demands are satisfied by Plutarch's *corpus* as a whole, a multi-faceted "macro-text"[5] for genres, addressees and topics, which can be considered an "encyclopaedia"[6] written to meet the new requirements of the middle and upper classes. The latter were the keepers of ancient and authoritative knowledge, but were "forced" to face a different reality, arising from the "new world order" established by the Roman Empire.[7]

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[3] On Eusebius' opinion about the pagan allegoresis, see A.P. Johnson, "Identity, Descent, and Polemic: Ethnic Argumentation in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*", *JECS* 12 (2004) 23–56; idem, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius*' Praeparatio Evangelica (Oxford 2006) 86.

[4] See E. Valgiglio, *Divinità e religione in Plutarco* (Genoa 1988) 121; L. Simonini (ed.), *Porfirio*, *L'antro delle Ninfe* (Milan 1986) 21; D. Babut, *Plutarco e lo stoicismo* (Milan 2003) 448–449, 458; G. Marchianò, *E. Zolla, Conoscenza religiosa. Scritti 1969–1983* (Rome 2006) 757.

[5] On the *corpus Plutarcheum* as a "macro-text", see G. D'Ippolito, "Il *corpus* plutarcheo come macrotesto di un progetto antropologico: modi e funzioni della autotestualità", in G. D'Ippolito & I. Gallo (eds), *Strutture formali dei 'Moralia' di Plutarco. Atti del III Convegno plutarcheo, Palermo, 3–5 maggio 1989* (Naples 1991) 9–18 at 10.

[6] See F. Brenk, "'Parlando senza profumi raggiunge con la voce mille anni'. Plutarco e la sua età", in P. Volpe Cacciatore & F. Ferrari (eds), *Plutarco e la cultura della sua età. Atti del X Convegno plutarcheo, Fisciano-Paestum, 27–29 ottobre 2005* (Naples 2007) 17–18.

[7] On Plutarch's relations with the Roman power, see J. Boulogne, *Plutarque. Un aristocrate grec sous l'occupation romaine* (Lille 1994); J. Sirinelli, *Plutarque de Chéronée. Un philosophe dans le siècle* (Paris 2000) 53–109; Brenk, "Parlando senza profumi", 16–17, 19–20, 24; Ph.A. Stadter, "Plutarco e la formazione dell'ideologia traianea", in Volpe Cacciatore & Ferrari (eds), *Plutarco e la cultura della sua età*, 189–204. On the religious problems linked to Plutarch's relation with his time, see G. Sfameni Gasparro, "The Globalisation

In fr. 157 the author uses myth, aetiology, allegoric interpretation, linguistic and grammatical exegesis to provide a comprehensive and mystical reconstruction of reality. In particular, Plutarch draws his attention to the myth of Zeus and Hera on Mount Cithaeron,[8] which was commemorated during the Daedalean festival celebrated in Plataea, Boeotia,[9] thereby demonstrating an interest in the issue of conjugal love which he thoroughly examined in the dialogue *On Love*. Indeed, as far as what can be reconstructed from the fragment, there seem to be significant similarities between the two *opuscula*: the Boeotian setting[10] in the festival[11] days, the

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and Localisation of Religion: from Hellenism to Late Antiquity. Assessing a Category in the History of Religions", in L.H. Martin & P. Pachis (eds), *Hellenisation, Empire, and Globalisation. Lessons from Antiquity* (Bergen 2004) 41–84; I. Saelid Gilhus, "Globalisation and Religion in the Roman Empire", in Martin & Pachis, *Hellenisation*, 85–100; T. Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic. Greece and Rome* (Oxford 2005) 8; E. Muñiz Grijalvo, "Elites and Religion Change in Roman Athens", *Numen* 52 (2005) 255–282.

[8] On Zeus's numerous marriages, see K. Dowden, *Zeus* (London 2006) 31; on the metamorphosis myth of Cithaeron, a shepherd who refused Tisiphone's hideous love, see Plu., [*De fluviis*] 1150F–1151A.

[9] See also Paus. 9.3, who occasionally gives a different version of the myth (see below n. 53). On these feasts, see V. v. Schoeffer, in *RE* IV.2 (1901), s.v. "Daidala" (6), coll. 1991–1993; C. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, I (Leipzig 1862) 244–245; A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia*, s.v. "Hera (Plataia)", *BICS*, suppl. 38.1 (1981) 245–250. On the significance of this rite, besides the classic M.P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung* (Leipzig 1906) 50, see also K. Kerenyi, *Zeus und Hera. Urbild des Vaters und der Frau* (Leiden 1972) 114–117; F. Frontisi-Ducroux, *Dédale. Mythologie de l'artisan en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1975) 193–216; M. Rocchi, "Kithairon et les fêtes des Daidalas", *DHA* 15 (1989) 309–324; I. Clark, "The Gamos of Hera: Myth and Ritual", in S. Blundell & M. Williamson (eds), *The Sacred and the Feminine in ancient Greece* (London–New York 1998) 13–26; A. Chaniotis, "Ritual Dynamics: the Boiotian Festivals of the Daidala", in H.F.J. Horstmanshoff et al. (eds), *Kykeon. Studies in Honour of H.S. Versnel* (Leiden 2002) 23–48; idem, "Ritual Dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean: Cases Studies in Ancient Greece and Asia Minor", in W.V. Harris (ed.), *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (Oxford 2005) 155–160; J.Y. Strasser, "La fête des Daidala de Platées et la 'Grande Année' d'Oinopidès", *Hermes* 132 (2004) 338–351; P.A. Iversen, "The Small and Great Daidala in Boiotian History", *Historia* 56 (2007) 381–418; N. Moggi & M. Osanna (eds), *Pausania. Guida della Grecia*, IX: *La Beozia* (Milan 2010) 230–232. On the political aspects linked to this cult, see L. Prandi, "L'*heraion* di Platea e la festa dei Daidala", in M. Sordi (ed.), *Santuari e Politica nel mondo antico* (Milan 1983) 82–94; idem, *Platea: momenti e problemi della storia di una polis* (Padova 1988).

[10] Boeotia should have been a privileged observation post for Plutarch, for both personal and cultural reasons: apart from Plutarch's "patrioctic" spirit, of which he is proud, that region was likely to fascinate him enormously. Mount Helicon with the seat of the Muses, the mysterious Theban saga of Oedipus, Hesiod and Pindar's poetry, represent the oldest and most sacred core of the Greek mythical and literary knowledge, the very identity of the Greek world. Consequently, the choice of the same surroundings as a background for the two works might have implied a strong symbolical and ideological value.

[11] In the case of the *On Love* it is dealt with the *Erotidia*, on which see S. Fasce, *Eros:*

subject, the philosophical and mystical meaning of marriage, seeming suggest that the text may be contemporary to the *On Love*.

First of all Plutarch claims that the prerogative of the παλαιὰ φυσιολογία ("ancient natural science") lay in the fact that it was a λόγος φυσικός ("scientific argument") still conveyed in a highly symbolic language, so it turned naturally into a mysterious and esoteric theology (μυστηριώδης θεολογία), traceable in the Orphic verses[12] and in the Egyptian or Phrygian[13] tales. Therefore myths and liturgies are a representation, through images and ritual acts, of concepts attributable to a scientific discourse that the παλαιοί[14] ("ancients") expressed in apparently naïve—yet highly suggestive—forms, especially for the πολλοί ("masses") who did not gain access to more mature forms of knowledge. In his *corpus* Plutarch seems to be interested in using art and cult or folk traditions to address a larger or less cultivated public. However, the richness and conceptual density of Plutarch's prose also implies highly cultured addressees, who were able to understand the philosophical and theological levels of the argument, which was developed in the form of a platonic dialogue.

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la figura e il culto (Genoa 1977) 18–20, 45–50; Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia,* s.v. "Eros (Thespiai)" 216–219; V. Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque* (Athens-Liège 1994) 289–290; A. Georgiadou, "Plutarch's *Amatorius*: towards a Reconstruction of a Cult of Eros", in L. Van der Stockt et al. (eds), *Gods, Daimones, Rituals, Myths and History of Religions in Plutarch's Work. Studies Devoted to Professor Frederick E. Brenk by the International Plutarch Society* (Logan–Malaga 2010) 229–254; Moggi & Osanna, *Pausania. Guida della Grecia*, 370.

[12] Plutarch also refers to the Orphism as a theology/philosophy which expressed itself obscurely and symbolically: see A. Bernabé, "Plutarco e l'orfismo", in I. Gallo (ed.), *Plutarco e la religione. Atti del VI Convegno plutarcheo, Ravello, 29–31 maggio 1995* (Naples 1996) 63–104 at 87–104. In fr. 212 Sandbach, indeed, Orpheus is credited with the "transfer" to Athens of the Dyonisian rites, Panathenaic festival, Thesmophoria and Eleusinian mysteries, as well as shifting Isis and Osiris's rites into the cult of Deo and Dionysus. On the Plutarchean use of μυστηριώδης, see *De Is*. 354E; *De garr*. 504A; 505F; 510E; *De es. carn*. 996B; *Qu. conv*. 717A; on the ὀργιασταὶ μυστηρίων, see *Cor*. 32,2; *De def*. 417A.

[13] On these Phrygian texts, see G. Casadio, "Osiride in Grecia e Dioniso in Egitto", in I. Gallo (ed.), *Plutarco e la religione*, 201–227 at 224–226; the scholar remarks Plutarch's tendency to deal with the mythical issues not only as a theologian, but also as "storico-fenomenologo delle religioni fortemente comparativista".

[14] See also Plu., *De Is*. 383A. The παλαιὸς λόγος narrating the πάθη of Isis and Osiris is the most suitable to the gods; in the first lines of fr. 177 Sandbach Plutarch deals with a παλαιὸς λόγος clearly influenced by the Orphic doctrine; in *De es. carn*. 996C the παλαιότερος λόγος is the orphic one, which stands for the rebirth of the soul. In fr. 190 Sandbach Plutarch claims that Egyptians, Babylonians and Phrygians manufactured divine images, established the mystery rites and later introduced them into Greece. The author also seems to blame the Ionians on the grounds of the παλαιὰ φιλοσοφία praised by Greeks and Barbarians, since they were thought to have introduced an erroneous form of representation.

In order to meet such a communicative requirement, Plutarch employs a precise rhetoric strategy, through which the semantic fields of light and darkness refer, on the one hand, to the nature of the god, and on the other hand to the myths and rituals hinting at that nature. This might have appealed to the middle and lower classes, who did not ignore the religious meanings of light and darkness, word and silence in the rite. Plutarch, a philosopher and theologian, seems to be aware of the apparent paradox whereby what is unveiled by words proves less evident than what is obscurely alluded to during the mystery rites;[15] moreover, the enlightening character of the ἀλήθεια ("un-veiling"), besides allowing a mature comprehension of the Apollonian nature of the god who "moves towards the light",[16] is also liable to obscure the value of rites and liturgies, stemming from the sacredness attributed to what is ancient and archaic.

The allegoric and allusive function of the archaic art is also highlighted in *On Isis and Osiris* 354C–D,[17] where one can find numerous verbal analogies with the assertions of the fragment at issue. Here too philosophy hides behind myths and tales from which an αἰνιγματώδη σοφία ("riddling knowledge") arises obscurely. The symbolic and occult element of Egyptian knowledge also appealed to ancient philosophers such as Pythagoras[18] and in *De def.* 420F[19] Plato as well is credited with an εὐλάβεια ("caution") which prompted him to use cryptic language (ὑπόνοιαν ἐμβαλὼν αἰνιγματώδη). So Plutarch follows a thread linking the mythical tales of antiquity to the philosophical interpretation; however, compared to that ancient knowledge, it discloses too "rationally" a truth which was most expressive by means of the ambiguous symbols of the myth.[20] Along with the eclipse of the oracles, no

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[15] Fr. 157 Sandbach 1: τά τε λαλούμενα τῶν σιγωμένων ἀσαφέστερα τοῖς πολλοῖς ἔχουσα (scil. μυστηριώδης θεολογία) καὶ τὰ σιγώμενα τῶν λαλουμένων ὑποπτότερα.

[16] Plu., *De Is.* 355E.

[17] Plu., *De Is.* 354C–D: [...] τῆς φιλοσοφίας, ἐπικεκρυμμένης τὰ πολλὰ μύθοις καὶ λόγοις ἀμυδρὰς ἐμφάσεις τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ διαφάσεις ἔχουσιν, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει καὶ παραδηλοῦσιν αὐτοὶ πρὸ τῶν ἱερῶν τὰς σφίγγας ἐπιεικῶς ἱστάντες, ὡς αἰνιγματώδη σοφίαν τῆς θεολογίας αὐτῶν ἐχούσης.

[18] Plu., *De Is.* 354F: μάλιστα δ' οὗτος, ὡς ἔοικε, θαυμασθεὶς καὶ θαυμάσας τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀπεμιμήσατο τὸ συμβολικὸν αὐτῶν καὶ μυστηριῶδες, ἀναμείξας αἰνίγμασι τὰ δόγματα.

[19] Plu., *De def.* 420F: καὶ Πλάτων αὐτῷ παρέσχε τὸ ἐνδόσιμον οὐχ ἁπλῶς ἀποφηνάμενος ἐκ δόξης δ' ἀμαυρᾶς καὶ ὑπόνοιαν ἐμβαλὼν αἰνιγματώδη μετ' εὐλαβείας. On the value of the word αἴνιγμα in the Plutarchean *corpus*, see A. Bernabé, "AINIGMA, AINITTOMAI: Exégesis alegórica en Platón y Plutarco", in A. Pérez Jiménez et al. (eds), *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles. Actas del V Congreso Internacional de la I.P.S., Madrid-Cuenca, 4–7 de mayo de 1999* (Madrid 1999) 189–200. See also L. Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths. Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology* (Chicago–London 2004) 63–71 at 70.

[20] According to Bernabé, "Plutarco e l'orfismo", 87, Plutarch's Orphism highlights the

longer pronounced in verses, Plutarch also faces the waning of a "sapiential" philosophy that reached its climax with Plato.[21]

If reason is fundamental to penetrate the obscurity of the ancients' words and ritual acts, then the philosopher/exegete is faced with the challenge of preventing the charm of the Hellenic sapiential mystery from being overcome by an excess of rationalism. For this reason Plutarch attempts to revitalize the local ritual traditions in his work; here the myth is more allusive than clarifying, thus preserving an arcane and primitive character.[22] Plutarch's "hermeneutical obsession"[23] in reviving cults and myths may also have psychological reasons: what matters is not the form of the rites, but preventing the rites from falling into oblivion due to a disaffection with tradition. Therefore, the Plutarchean discourse may be related to a

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Pythagorean, Eleusinian and Dionysian elements and is also characterized by "un'esegesi pitagorica, platonica, stoica, simbolica e etimologica, fino a tal punto che Plutarco non è capace di accettare direttamente il mito, ma lo accoglie solo attraverso un'interpretazione"; See also *De Is.* 382E. In fr. 202 Sandbach Plutarch claims that the τὸ συμβολικόν is typical of the Pythagorean philosophy; this is a form of teaching consisting in word and silence, as it happens in the initiation rites; it appears clear and evident for the initiate to this form of knowledge, whilst it is obscure and meaningless for the unexperienced; in fact in the Pythagorean symbols "what seems to be made known is really being concealed and what seems to be concealed is discerned by the mind" (translation by Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia* XV, 377; see also *Qu. Rom.* 281A). The expressions used seem very similar to this point of fr. 157. On a similar concept, conveyed with identical syntactic structures see *De lib. ed.* 10F. On the points of contact between this concept and those expressed within Christianity, see H.D. Betz (ed.), *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden 1975) 318–319. On the meaning and functions of myth in Plutarch, see L. Van der Stockt, *Twinkling and Twilight. Plutarch's Reflections on Literature* (Brussel 1992) 88–93; L. Torraca, "Linguaggio del reale e linguaggio dell'immaginario nel *De sera numinis vindicta*", in D'Ippolito & Gallo (eds), *Strutture formali*, 101–103; I. Gallo, "Funzione e significato dei miti nei dialoghi "morali" di Plutarco", in J.A. López Férez (ed.), *Mitos en la literatura griega helenística e imperial* (Madrid 2003) 197–208.

[21] See Plu., *De Pyth.* 407A–B, 409D. According to G.G. Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom. Esoteric Tradition and the Roots of Christian Mysticism* (Leiden 1996) 19, Plutarch seems to agree with the shift from an esoteric and cryptic knowledge, concealed in the verses and in the details of the myths and ancient rites, to a rationalistic knowledge, conveyed in prose. However, Plutarch might have been worried by the fact that rationalism, combining with a widespread materialism, could jeopardize the Hellenic traditions. It is noteworthy what Plutarch affirms in *De E* 385B–C: here he states that the principles of philosophical research are doubt and wonder, arising from the enigmas relating to gods. Therefore the numerous names indicating Apollo represent the various degrees of knowledge (see also below, n. 96).

[22] See the attractive remarks by V. Cilento (ed.), *Plutarco. Diatriba isiaca e Dialoghi delfici* (Naples 2005 [1962]) XXII.

[23] Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom*, 16 refers to a civilization of hermeneutics for the imperial age, so trying to bridge the gap with its own past.

wider trend towards recovering and defending the Greek "cultural memory",[24] in much the same way as the exponents of the Second Sophistic did.[25]

Plutarch takes the same stance in the *On Love*. Instead of denying Eros' divinity, which reduces the dimension of love to a narrow, secular and materialistic horizon—closely identified with epicurean thought–[26] he not only opposes (756B) the evidence of the παλαιὰ πίστις ("ancient faith") in the Hellenic religion—in cults, myths and rites—but also in the literary and philosophical tradition (especially the Platonic one). Actually, this was seen as the only shelter from the ominous changes that could jeopardize the solid structure of tradition, which also represented the only form of salvation for the Greek cultivated classes, faced with the advance of different and dangerous forms of culture and religion.[27]

Clearly, it is a rigorous plan of "restoration", yet carried out with great propensity for dialogue. It is aimed at integrating more than dividing or raising anachronistic barriers but strongly backed by the religious plane.[28] This project is not much different from that carried out culturally and politically with the other *Moralia* and with the *Lives*. The aim was to collect, classify, interpret and understand the material (historical, literary, philosophical, antiquarian) through which the Greeks could build their own identity and establish a dialogue with the new rulers, the Romans, who were required to

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[24] On the meaning of "cultural memory", see A. Assmann, *Ricordare. Forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale* (Bologna 2002).

[25] On Plutarch's position, see P. Vasunia, "Plutarch and the Return of the Archaic", in A.J. Boyle & W.J. Dominik (eds), *Flavian Rome. Culture, Image, Text* (Leiden 2003) 369–390 at 385; Chr. Bréchet, "Les *palaioi* chez Plutarque", in B. Backhouche (ed.), *L'ancienneté chez les Anciens*, II: *Mythologie et religion* (Montpellier 2003) 519–550.

[26] See A. Barigazzi, "L'amore: Plutarco contro Epicuro", in I. Gallo (ed.), *Aspetti dello stoicismo e dell'epicureismo in Plutarco. Atti del II convegno di studi su Plutarco, Ferrara, 2–3 aprile 1987* (Ferrara 1988) 89–108; R. Scannapieco, "Polemiche antiepicuree nell'*Amatorius* di Plutarco e nell'*Euboico* di Dione di Prusa", in AA.VV., *Aspetti del mondo classico: lettura ed interpretazione dei testi*, Seminari in collaborazione con l'*A.I.C.C. – Sede di Salerno* (Naples 2006) 81–126; G. Santese, "Plutarco, l'epicureismo e l'amore. 'Citazioni' epicuree nelle *Quaestiones convivales* e nell'*Erotikòs* di Plutarco", in J.M. Nieto Ibáñez & R. López López (eds), *El amor en Plutarco. Atti del IX Convegno internazionale plutarcheo* (Leon 2007) 179–186.

[27] See F. Frazier, "Platonisme et *Patrios Pistis* dans le Discours Central (chs. 13–20) de l'*Érotikos*", in Pérez Jiménez et al., *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles*, 343–355; idem, "Göttlichkeit und Glaube. Persönliche Gottesbeziehung im Spätwerk Plutarchs", in R. Hirsch-Luipold (ed.), *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch. Götterbilder—Gottesbilde—Weltbilder* (Berlin–New York 2005) 111–137 at 122–137. On πίστις see below, this volume, chapter 14, 215–233.

[28] Cf also P. Veyne, *L'impero greco—romano. Le radici del mondo globale* (Milan 2007) 585–587.

know the civilization they had conquered and to assimilate its models and values.[29]

Having determined Plutarch's ideological horizon, many statements in fr. 157 and in the *On Love* become clearer and show a solid and coherent system, despite the obvious differences which were probably due to the different times of composition, to a possible evolution of the author's thought during his long life, and to the historical conditions under which these works were written, in addition to the variety of genres, tones and "public" they were addressed to.

2. *The fr. 157 and the Dialogue* On Love*: A Common Ethical-Political Project?*

In the second paragraph, Plutarch provides an example of the way to interpret the details of a rite beyond their literal meaning: thus, following in Plato's footsteps (*Lg*. 775B–D), Plutarch justifies some ritual habits by means of health and social reasons: the clear separation between the rites of Hera and Dionysus and the prohibition of ivy in Hera's τέμενος mean that wine is discreditable to the prospective bride and groom, of whom Hera is the protector (γαμήλιος καὶ νυμφαγωγός), since an excess of drinking is the cause of disorders both in the body and in the soul, and can also harm the foetus; moreover, during sacrifices, the victims' bile is not offered to Hera, but is buried next to the altar, because the συμβίωσις of the couple should not experience debasement nor resentment, and be free from rage and hostility.

The prescription relating to the couple should be placed in a social and "political" context, as demonstrated by the comparison with *Coni. praec*. 141E–F,[30] where Plutarch provides the same explanation of the same cere-

[29] See on the issue of "social memory", Brenk, "Parlando senza profumi", 36. From a more political viewpoint, the exemplary and paideutical function of the *Lives* (especially compared to the prince's education) is underlined by Stadter, "Plutarco e la formazione dell'ideologia traianea", *passim*. In particular, the scholar also remarks Plutarch's position as a priest of the sanctuary of Delphi, "un monumento vivente del glorioso passato della Grecia e dei principi razionali, fondamento della cultura greca" (194). See also J. Dillon, "The Social Role of the Philosopher in the Second Century C.E.: Some Remarks", in Ph.A. Stadter & L. Van der Stockt (eds), *Sage and Emperor. Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan (98–117 A.D.)* (Leuven 2002) 29–40; G. Zecchini, "Plutarch as Political Theorist and Trajan: Some Reflections", in Stadter & Van der Stockt (eds), *Sage and Emperor*, 191–200; R. Feldmeier, "Philosoph und Priester; Plutarch als Theologe", in M. Baumbach et al. (eds), *Mousopolos Stephanos* (Heildelberg 1998) 412–425.

[30] Plu., *Coni. praec*. 141E–F: Οἱ τῇ γαμηλίῳ θύοντες Ἥρᾳ τὴν χολὴν οὐ συγκαθαγίζουσι τοῖς ἄλλοις ἱεροῖς, ἀλλ'ἐξελόντες ἔρριψαν παρὰ τὸν βωμόν, αἰνιττομένου τοῦ νομοθέτου τὸ μηδέποτε

monial rite, and highlights that the rite has a hidden meaning of its own, going beyond the bounds of religion, thus becoming a norm of social life concealed within the prescriptions of the legislator (αἰνιττομένου τοῦ νομοθέτου).

However, it is in the *On Love* that Plutarch describes in the most exhaustive way his idea of marriage as συμβίωσις ("common life"),[31] a projection at a familiar level of the state order, for the sake of which the bride and groom become married and give birth to children (756E) who are raised according to the values shared by the community.

In the account and exegesis of the mythical wedding of Zeus and Hera and of the local cult devoted to them, Plutarch must have been prompted by the need to reconcile philosophical demands—which are developed in a more structured way in the last part of the fragment—with a broader discussion of the role of the couple in society, as is the case in the *On Love*. Therefore, the strategy of making the ἱερὸς γάμος ("sacred marriage") of Zeus and Hera a symbol of the cosmic order, socially reflected by the marriage between man and woman, could help to fight the Christian ascetical trends which debased sex thereby jeopardizing from within the identity of the pagan society,[32] that the mythic accounts—rooted in the local traditions of Boeotia—helped to consolidate.

3. *Rhetorical Strategies and Philosophical Meanings*

In the account of Hera's abduction by Zeus there are more references to the semantic fields of light and darkness: the father of gods hides his beloved in a shadowy cave of Mount Cithaeron (ἱστοροῦσι τὴν Ἥραν [...] ὑπὸ Διὸς κλαπῆναι, καὶ διακομισθεῖσαν ἐνταῦθα κρύπτεσθαι Κιθαιρῶνος αὐτοῖς μυχὸν ἐπίσκιόν τινα [...] παρασχόντος); the mount helps him when Macris, Hera's wet-nurse, comes in search of the goddess; Cithaeron tells her that Zeus lived there with

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δεῖν χολὴν μηδὲ ὀργὴν γάμῳ παρεῖναι. Δεῖ γὰρ εἶναι τῆς οἰκοδεσποίνης ὥσπερ οἴνου τὸ αὐστηρὸν ὠφέλιμον καὶ ἡδύ, μὴ πικρὸν ὥσπερ ἁλόης μηδὲ φαρμακῶδες.

31 The marriage is συμβίωσις also in *Coni. praec.* 138D, 141B, 142F; *Qu. Rom.* 263E and fr. * 204 Sandbach. In *Amat.* Plutarch uses the words συγκαταβιόω (754A) and συγκαταζάω (749D).

32 On the new concept of marriage and sexuality in the Christian era, see P. Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women and Sexual Renounciation in Early Christianity* (New York 1988); J. Evans Grubbs, "Pagan and 'Christian' marriage: the State of the Questions", *JECS* 2 (1994) 361–412; G. Sissa, *Eros tiranno. Sessualità e sensualità nel mondo antico* (Rome-Bari 2003) 215–249; K.L. Gaca, *Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Berkeley 2003) 221–245.

Leto: that's why Hera shares a temple with Leto Mychia (Μυχία) or Nychia (Νυχία). In both epithets there is a reference to the goddess' concealment: the former refers to the cave (μυχόν) where she was hidden, the latter to the darkness of the night. However, when her marriage to Zeus was made known, the goddess changed her name into Hera Teleia[33] or Gamelia[34] (φανερῶν δὲ τῶν γάμων γενομένων καὶ περὶ τὸν Κιταιρῶνα πρῶτον ἐνταῦθα καὶ τὰς Πλαταιὰς τῆς ὁμιλίας ἀνακαλυφθείσης, Ἥραν Τελείαν καὶ Γαμήλιον αὐτὴν προσαγορευθῆναι). The change of epithet by the goddess emphasizes the opposition between a healthy *eros*, acknowledged by the community because of marriage and procreation, and an abnormal, obscure one, therefore excluded and left in obscurity; Plutarch uses the same rhetorical technique in the *On Love* by means of the semantic fields of light and darkness; in this way Plutarch conveys the spiritual uplifting allowed by the true *eros* and the brutalization of an existence where the carnal and material element prevails: Plutarch blames this situation on the Epicureans, a "sect" which indeed fostered a lifestyle in the background and with mysterious pleasures.[35]

In the fourth paragraph Plutarch seems to use more systematically the method of exegesis of the myth on a scientific basis (φυσικῶς), entwining it with the etymological and allegorical method, typical of the Stoic school.[36] Indeed he provides an explanation where etymologies and scientific, astronomical and astrological notions merge together, in accordance with a typical feature of his works. Also in this case the metaphors of light and darkness are developed coherently, thus appearing to be a correct key to text

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[33] On the epithet of Teleia, see Kerenyi, *Zeus und Hera*, 81, 98–104; P. Lévêque & L. Séchan, *Les grandes divinités de la Grèce* (Paris 1966) 178, 182. On the relations between Hera and marriage see also J. Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults. A Guide* (New York 2007) 38–40.

[34] On the use of γαμήλιος with reference to Hera, see also Pl., *Lg*. 774; on Jupiter γαμήλιος and γενέθλιος, see *SVF* 3.727. This is the Hera Numpheuomene mentioned by Paus. 9.3.1. On the union of Zeus and Hera on Mount Cithaeron, see L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, I (Berlin 1860) 128.

[35] I just quote as examples *Amat*. 751F, 764D, 765B. The same technique is also used in *On Love*: see R. Scannapieco, "Polemiche antiepicuree", 91–96.

[36] See I. Ramelli (ed.), *Anneo Cornuto, Compendio di teologia greca* (Milan 2003) 31–41, 73–87, 95–101, 455–469; J.B. Gourinat, "Explicatio fabularum: la place de l'allégorie dans l'interprétation stoïcienne de la mythologie", in G. Dahan & R. Goulet, *Allégorie des poètes, allégorie des philosophes: etudes sur la poétique et l'herméneutique de l'allégorie de l'Antiquité à la Réforme* (Paris 2005) 9–34 at 25–29; R. Radice, *Introduzione* a I. Ramelli (ed.), *Allegoristi dell'età classica. Opere e frammenti* (Milan 2007) XXIII–XXVI; the work attributed to Plutarch is translated on pp. 825–829. On the implementation of the etymological method by Plutarch, see J.F. Martos Montiel, "El uso de la etimología en los *Moralia* de Plutarco", in M. García Valdés (ed.), *Estudios sobre Plutarco: ideas religiosas. Actas del III simposio internacional sobre Plutarco, Oviedo 30 de abril a 2 de mayo de 1992* (Madrid 1994) 575–582.

interpretation. Hera, the marriage between man and woman, may be identified with the earth[37] and with the night; the latter is Leto, whose name is actually similar to "oblivion" (ληθώ), the condition of the sleeper.[38] Physically speaking, the night is the shadow of the earth (σκιὰ τῆς γῆς), stretching to the sky until this is covered completely when it reaches the west at sunset[39] or hiding the moon during the eclipses.[40] The identity between Hera and Leto is also determined through Artemis, who is daughter of Leto, but is also called Eileithyia, daughter of Hera according to tradition. However, Hera is also the mother of Ares, the god who incites (ἀρήγων) in battle, whereas Leto is the mother of Apollo, who frees (ἀπαλλάττων) and redeems (ἀπολύων) man from physical affections.[41] So Apollo is the red-hot star, the Sun,[42] while Ares is the planet most similar to fire, Mars. Now, if Hera and Leto are different names of the same goddess, it follows that also Ares and Apollo are two δυνάμεις, two faces and two names of the same god.

Plutarch concludes his explanation quoting Hom., *Il.* 16.187–188 (αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ τόν γε μογοστόκος Εἰλείθυια / ἐξάγαγε προφόωσδε καὶ ἠελίου ἴδεν αὐγάς), with the evocation of the birth of Eudoros, son of Hermes and Polymela, that Eileithyia helped to bring into the world. The author remarks that the poet used efficiently the expression προφόωσδε, merging together the preposition προ and the compound φόωσδε, which itself contained the idea of motion due to the presence of the suffix–δε. Such a straining of language[43] matches

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[37] In Plu., *De Is.* 366E, 374C the earth is the image of Isis/Aphrodite; on the identification with the φύσις/ὕλη on the natural and philosophical plans, see R. Scannapieco, "Afrodite e la luna in Plu. *Amat.* 19, 764B–D", in Nieto Ibáñez & López López (eds), *El amor en Plutarco*, 428–434.

[38] See fr. 178 Sandbach.

[39] Fr. 157 Sandbach 4: ὅταν γὰρ πλησιάσασα ταῖς δυσμαῖς ἀποκρύψῃ τὸν ἥλιον, ἀναπλατυνομένη μελαίνει τὸν ἀέρα. This is the text of the codices that I support in Volpe Cacciatore (ed.), Plutarco, *I frammenti*, 180, whilst Sandbach corrects needlessly πλησιάσασα with πλησιάσαντα; thus is also interpreted by Ramelli, *Allegoristi*, 826 ("Ogni volta in cui, infatti, avvicinandosi al tramonto, nasconde il sole, ampliandosi, oscura l'aria"), who translates Bernardakis' text.

[40] See Plu., *De placit. phil.* 891F; *Aem. Paul.* 17,9; *De fac.* 923B, 932D.

[41] See also A. Cornutus, 32, p. 65, 1–2 Lang; On Apollo's twofold nature since the Homeric times, see F. Càssola (ed.), *Inni omerici* (Milan 1994) 79–83; F. Graf, *Apollo* (London–New York 2009) 79–102.

[42] On the identification of Apollo with the Sun, see also Plu., *De E* 393D–E; *De def.* 433D–E; contra, see *De Pyth.* 400D.

[43] On the *status quaestionis* relating to the Homeric text πρὸ φόωσδε, see R. Janko, *The Iliad: a Commentary*, IV: books 13–16 (Cambridge 1992) 344. Rather unconvincing seems the interpretation given by Ramelli, *Allegoristi*, 827: she claims that the compound word that

the poet's aim of representing the difficulty of childbirth. Moreover, according to Plutarch, Hera, the patron goddess of marriage, is considered to be the mother of Eileithyia/Artemis and of Apollo/Sun, because the purpose of marriage is birth, which consists in a journey (fostered by Eileithyia) from darkness to sunlight (the Sun is identified with Apollo): γάμου μὲν γὰρ τέλος γένεσίς ἐστι, γένεσις δ'ἡ εἰς ἥλιον καὶ φῶς ἐκ σκότους πορεία.[44]

The homologies Apollo/Sun,[45] Eileithyia/Artemis[46] and consequently Hera/Leto,[47] determined on etymological and/or physical grounds, are aimed at defining life as a surfacing to the light, that is, within Good and through Good. On the contrary, Evil is identified with the gloomy darkness, which coincides with the dark face of an *eros* where the bodily dimension prevails and is not directed towards procreation.[48]

The dualism life-death, light-darkness, Good-Evil that Plutarch extends to the whole physical realm as well as to man, later seems to shift towards a reduction of the ominous activity of Evil which, despite being present and antagonistic, will be finally defeated by Good. For instance, Ares' negative δύναμις is counteracted since it is seen as a help (ἀρήγειν) in battles, according to a strategy which Plutarch also implements in the *On Love*. Here (757B) he blames Chrysippus for supporting the derivation of Ares' name from the verb ἀναιρεῖν ("to destroy"), whereas it should be interpreted as the δύναμις ("force") which opposes what is vile (ἡ δ'ἀντιτακτικὴ πρὸς τὸ αἰσχρὸν)[49] in one's mind (759D–E).

Plutarch refers to should be μογοστόκος. On the allegoric interpretation of the Homeric text, see P. Chiron, "Aspects rhétoriques et grammaticaux de l'interprétation allégorique d'Homère", in Dahan & Goulet, *Allégorie des poètes*, 35–58.

[44] However in fr. 177 Sandbach Plutarch gives a different explanation of the birth on etymological grounds: it is an inclination of the soul towards the earth (εἰς γῆν νεῦσις).

[45] See Plu., *De E* 386B.

[46] On the identification of Eileithyia with Artemis, which was widespread especially in Boeotia, see P.V.C. Baur, *Eileithyia* (Chicago 1902) 221, 225–226 (on the epigraphic attestation to Thespiae), 267 (on the overlapping of the two figures).

[47] On the scarce diffusion of the Leto cult in Greece, where the goddess competes with her daughter Artemis and with Hera, see Lévêque & Séchan, *Les grandes divinités*, 194–195.

[48] See Scannapieco, "Polemiche antiepicuree", 100–103.

[49] The evidence provided by *Amat.* 757B agrees with *SVF* 2.1094. The Plutarchean codices convey the infinitive ἀναιρεῖν which is emended into 'Αναίρην by Wilamowitz, followed by R. Flacelière, *Plutarque, Œuvres Morales*, X: *Dialogue sur l'Amour* (Paris 1980), into ἀναιρέτην by I.I. Reiske, *Plutarchi Chaeronensis quae supersunt omnia*, IX (Leipzig 1778) and by H. Görgemanns et al., *Plutarch, Dialog über die Liebe* (Tübingen 2006). The only editor who conserves the infinitive is Valverde, *Plutarco, Obras morales y de costumbres*, X (Madrid 2003), but actually also von Arnim in his edition of the Stoic fragments did not emend the text. On further examples of use of the infinitive in these contexts, see at least *SVF* 2.664, 1089 and Plu.,

4. *The Philosophical Background of fr. 157: The Model of Plato's* Stateman

In the last section quoted by Eusebius (6–7) Plutarch finally gives the rationalistic (λόγος) explanation of the μῦθος ("myth") related to the wedding of Zeus and Hera, following a typically stoic interpretation.[50] The myth in its most naïve (εὐηθέστερον) form recounts that Zeus, in order to make peace with Hera, who had avoided his encounters (κρυπτούσης),[51] thanks to Alalcomeneus's[52] advice, provokes the spouse's jealousy. He secretly (κρύφα) cuts an oak and uses its wood to make a female-featured ξόανον ("wooden image") which, dressed properly, would represent the god's new bride, Daidale.[53] At the time of the procession, Hera, overcome by anger and jealousy (ὀργὴ καὶ ζηλοτυπία)[54] throws herself at the simulacrum; she realizes the deception and after being merrily (μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ γέλωτος)[55] reconciled

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[*Vit. Hom.*] 16. On the argument of *Amat.* 759D–E, see R. Caballero Sánchez, "Afrodita y Ares en el alma (*Amat.* 759D–E): tras la huella intertextual de Platón en Plutarco", in Nieto Ibáñez & López López, *El amor en Plutarco*, 27–39.

[50] See G.R. Boys-Stones, "The Stoics' Two Types of Allegory", in idem (ed.), *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition. Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions* (Oxford 2003) 189–216; C. Lévy, "Sur l'allégorèse dans l'Ancien Portique", in B. Pérez & J.P. Eichel Lojkine (eds), *L'Allégorie de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* (Paris 2004) 221–232; R. Goulet, "La méthode allégorìque chez les Stoïciens", in G. Romeyer Dherbuy & J.B. Gourinat (eds), *Les Stoïciens* (Paris 2005) 93–119.

[51] This particular maybe hints at the death and resurrection of divinities representing the natural cycles; however, from the time of the Homeric texts the relation between Hera and Zeus had already seen moments of "illegality", before the legitimation from all the other gods: see *Il.* 14.296 εἰς εὐνὴν φοιτῶντε, φίλους λήθοντε τοκῆας.

[52] On Alalcomeneus, see G. Wentzel, in *RE*, I.1 (1893), s.v. "Alalcomeneus" (2), coll. 1276–1277. On the figure of the first man with a cunning character like Odysseus or Prometheus, see K. Kerenyi – E. Neumann – G. Scholem & J. Hillman, *Arquetipos y símbolos colectivos* (Barcelona 2004 [1994]) 41. On Alalcomeneus and Kythairon as mythical doubles of Daedalus, with whom they share cunningness and the ability to deceive, see Frontisi-Ducroux, *Dédale*, 213–216.

[53] In Pausanias' version, Kythairon, lord of Plataea, suggests that Zeus make a wooden image, to be covered and taken on a cart, in order to pretend it was the new bride, Plataea, daughter of Asopus. On the value of the word ξόανον in Pausanias, see J.C. Vincent, "The *xoanon* in Pausanias: Literatures and Cultual Realities", *DHA* 29 (2003) 31–75 at 75; on the δαίδαλον of the feasts in Plataea, see S.P. Morris, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton 1995) 54–58. On the *xoana* linked to the Hera cult, see J.V. O'Brien, *The Transformation of Hera. A Study of Ritual, Hero, and the Goddess in the Iliad* (Lanham 1993) 18–19, 55.

[54] In fr. 136 Sandbach the "teeth" and the "nails" of the beast Eros are suspicion and jealousy (ὑποψία, ζηλοτυπία). In *Amat.* 764B–D ὀργαὶ καὶ ζηλοτυπίαι are cause of contrast between the lovers: in this passage too the reconciliation between the two lovers is compared to the sun breaking through fog and clouds.

[55] On Hera's smile, see S. Reinach, *Cultes, mythes et religions*, IV (Paris 1912) 109–112.

(διαλλαγεῖσαν) with Zeus, she herself leads the procession, which ends with the puppet burning.[56]

In the last paragraph Plutarch explains that the contrast (διαφορὰ καὶ στάσις) between Zeus and Hera symbolically represents the disorder of the elements (στοιχείων δυσκρασία καὶ τάραχος);[57] when they are not balanced, disorder (ἀνωμαλία)[58] and turbulence (τραχύτης)[59] arise, and their fight (δυσμαχήσαντα)[60] brings about the destruction of the universe (φθορὰ τῶν ὅλων).[61] In fact, Zeus stands for the hot power of the igneous element (δύναμις τερμὴ καὶ πυρώδης),[62] while Hera represents the humid and windy nature of the air (φύσις ὑγρὰ καὶ πνευματική);[63] when destruction (διαφθορά)[64] is caused by the prevalence of Zeus/igneous element, this generates drought (αὐχμός), whilst the excessive overabundance (ὕβρις τις ἢ πλεονασμός)[65] of Hera/humid element causes flood (ῥεῦμα … πολύ); the calm following such a cataclysm occurred in Boeotia,[66] commemorated by the Feasts in Plataea, stands for a new balance between the elements. In the myth this is repre-

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[56] Paus. 9.3.7–9 gives a more precise description of the procession stages, ending with the burning of the offerings and of the δαῖδαλα. On the cryptic meaning of these images, and on the divine and human figures represented by the δαῖδαλα, see Frontisi-Ducroux, *Dédale*, 199–211.

[57] On the Stoic definition of the elements (στοιχεῖα) different from the principles (ἀρχαί) in that they are generated and subject to transformation, see *SVF* 1.85, 102; 2.299, 309, 327, 413, 419, 444, 580. On the term δυσκρασία, see Plu., *Amat.* 758D; *De Is.* 371B; *An. corp. affect.* 502A.

[58] See Plu., *Qu. conv.* 647D; *De placit. phil.* 911A; *Amat.* 763D; *Qu. nat.* 913A, 915A; *De prim. frig.* 954E; *De an. procr.* 1016A, 1016D, 1028E, 1029D; *Adv. Stoic.* 1078F.

[59] For Chrysippus the τραχύτης is an ἐπιθυμία ἀνώμαλος (see *SVF* 3.397). See also *De E* 389B.

[60] On the use of this verb, see below, on p. 212.

[61] The φθορά, that is the ἐκπύρωσις, consists in the μεταβολή of the cosmos (see *SVF* 2.596); see also below, n. 96.

[62] See *SVF* II 1066.

[63] In [*Vit. Hom.*] II 96 Hera is the ἀήρ, that is ὑγρὰ οὐσία, while the πνευματικὴ δύναμις is Hephaestus, see II 99–102; see also *De placit. phil.* 885B, 898D; *Adv. Stoic.* 1085D; *Adv. Col.* 1118E.

[64] Contrary to what I published in Volpe Cacciatore (ed.), Plutarco, *Frammenti*, 184, it is possible to retain διαφθορᾶς avoiding the emendation διαφορᾶς suggested by Sandbach, but actually to be attributed to Korais according to Clavier, *Œuvres mêlées*, 225 n. 1. Also Adriani's translation ("discrepanza") in *Opuscoli*, 1253, presupposes διαφορᾶς; διαφθορᾶς is retained by Wyttenbach, Dübner, Bernardakis and des Places in the edition of Eusebius. On a possible influence of the lexicon of Plato's *Statesman* relating to the choice of this term, see below, n. 96.

[65] See *SVF* 2.601.

[66] It is the so called deluge of Ogyges, two centuries before the Deucalion one (see fr. 9 B 20 DK).

sented by the final reconciliation (διαλλαγή)[67] of the two gods and by the conjugal ὁμόνοια ("concord"),[68] sanctioned by the burning of the wooden statue, which could represent renewal following the ἐκπύρωσις.[69]

The identification of the Greek gods with natural elements—which belongs to a Stoic tradition—prompted Decharme[70] to assume that the fragment contains the words of a character whose opinions perhaps are not shared by Plutarch. Actually, the wedding of Zeus and Hera was interpreted by the Stoics from a physical viewpoint: Zeus, ether,[71] fire or the *pneuma*, principle permeating reality,[72] is above the air, which instead is identified with Hera;[73] of the two elements, linked by their rarefied nature, Zeus may be considered the husband[74] for the position he holds; he can also be identified with the seminal reasons, while Hera corresponds to the matter.[75] In fact, Chrysippus explained the image located in Argos which depicted Hera touching Zeus' phallus with the mouth as a symbolic representation of the matter receiving the seminal reasons of the god to create the universe.[76]

The alternate events of destruction and reconstruction of the cosmos, as described by Chrysippus in *SVF* 2.622, are efficiently symbolized by the mythical reference to the hierogamy of Zeus and Hera, as a union of spirit and matter;[77] Chrysippus' attribution of a "desiring" nature to the νοῦς does not contradict the rational one: the strain towards the palingenesis may be interpreted as an act of love from the divinity to the world, which in turn lets itself be meekly run through by this force, according to an interpretation of the physical and spiritual reality similar to what Plutarch expresses in fr. 157 and, in more complex forms, in the *On Love* or in *De Is*. 372E–F.

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67 See *Dio*. 16.3; *Amat*. 764C.

68 On the marriage as ὁμόνοια, see also Dio Chrysost., *Or*. XXXVIII 15.

69 See A.A. Long, "The Stoics on World-Conflagration and Everlasting Recurrence", in R.H. Epp (ed.), *Recovering the Stoics, Third Spijndel Conference, Memphis, October 18–20, 1984* (Memphis 1985) 13–38.

70 See P. Decharme, "Note sur un fragment des *Daedala* de Plutarque", in *Mélange H. Weil. Recueil de mémoires concernant l'histoire et la littérature grecque dédié à Henri Weil* (Paris 1898) 111–117.

71 See *SVF* 1.154; 2.126, 1070.

72 See *SVF* 1.146, 157, 171; 3.17, 38.

73 See *SVF* 2.1075.

74 See *SVF* 2.1066.

75 See *SVF* 2.1074.

76 See *SVF* 2.1072–1074.

77 *SVF* 2.622: Μιχθεὶς δὲ τότε Ἥρᾳ καὶ μεταλαβὼν τοῦ τελειοτάτου λέχους, ἀναπαυσάμενος ἀφίησι τὴν πᾶσαν αὖ τοῦ παντὸς γονήν. τοῦτον ὑμνοῦσι παῖδες σοφῶν ἐν ἀῤῥήτοις τελεταῖς Ἥρας καὶ Διὸς εὐδαίμονα γάμον.

If we read the statements reported in the Plutarchean fragment in the light of the claims of the *On Isis and Osiris*, Plutarch—despite applying the Stoic's method to the etymological interpretation of the names of gods, and the physico-naturalistic one to give a moralizing lecture of the myth—goes beyond the identities between gods and natural elements, which are typical of Stoicism and unacceptable for him. On the contrary, the wedding of Zeus and Hera and the following contrasts might represent, on a mythical level, the condition of the universe fruit of the action of the demiurge god; with his rational intervention he arranges matter, upset by the kinetic element, the irrational pre-cosmic soul, which Plutarch discusses thoroughly in the *De animae procreatione in Timaeo*.[78]

In the *On Isis and Osiris* Hera is identified with the air (363D), whereas this time the humid principle is Osiris (364A), that is also wind (375F), *logos* (373B), Sun (371F) or the good and ordered world (376F, 371A–B); the matter/Isis yields to the ἀρχή/Osiris, who allows her to procreate by giving her his semen (372E–F). The αὐχμός ("drought") or the ῥεῦμα ("flood of water"), that in fr. 157 occur when one or the other element prevails, in the *On Isis and Osiris* are imputed to the evil influence of Typhon. Typhon represents the irrational part of the soul, subject to passions, and the mortal side of nature, showing itself through bad weather, natural imbalances and the eclipses of sun and moon (371B).

On these ideological grounds Plutarch can correct in the *On Isis and Osiris* the Egyptian identity between Typhon and the Sun which burns the vegetation, and between Osiris and the Moon, whose humid and fertile light fosters the birth and growth of plants and animals, establishing instead an homology between Osiris and the Sun, a visible manifestation of the essence of good.[79] Thus, delving into the Egyptian thought, in the *On Love* 764B–C– with reference to Plato, *R.* 509B—he claims that the sunshine supplies τροφή ("nourishment"), φῶς ("light") and αὔξησις ("growth") to the body, while Eros supplies them to the soul. Therefore, it is possible to draw the equation Osiris = Sun = Eros, an overall synthesis of the idea of Good, that according to Plutarch represents the divinity.

In fr. 157, although the excess of the igneous element might lead an identification of Zeus with Typhon, the role played by the couple Zeus/Hera is identical to the pair Isis/Osiris in the *On Isis and Osiris* and ultimately to

[78] See F. Ferrari & L. Baldi (eds), *Plutarco. La generazione dell'anima nel Timeo* (Naples 2002) 41–45.

[79] Actually Osiris' garments are of the color of the flame (371F).

Eros' role in the *On Love*: more than the δυνάμεις ("forces") of each component of the couple—which may change according to the myth the author focuses on—in Plutarch's view, marriage represents symbolically the harmonious union of the male and female element, of dry and wet,[80] rain and earth,[81] Sun and Moon,[82] soul and body, matter and spirit, and consequently, the unity of the cosmos characterized by the action of Good. The couple of gods in contrast was a mythical and efficient symbol to represent the universe as the result of opposing forces[83] merging together.

The tendency to organize discourse around the positive and negative semantic fields of light and darkness, in the last paragraphs of the fragment too, is not a mere rhetorical play, and becomes important for the philosophical meaning of its statements. The alternation of light and darkness represents the fate of an ever-changing cosmos: in fact, the life of the universe, as Plato stated in *Tim*. 47E–48A, is defined by Plutarch in *De an. procr*. 1026B as "harmony and reason leading necessity mixed with persuasion", that is, a harmonious order of the elements, but also a place of disorder and violence, a center of the irrational pre-cosmic soul, consubstantial with the matter and cause of evil, corruption and death.[84] In fact the matter by its very nature, is characterized by destruction and privation,[85] so the struggle between the destroying power (the Typhon of the *De Is*.) and the harmonizing one is constant and continuous.[86] Among the different definitions of cosmos provided by the dualist philosophers, Plutarch quotes in this passage Parmenides' one of "light and darkness";[87] however, also the other pairs of principles (listed by Plutarch) may find a parallel with the homologies in fr. 157: the separation and reconciliation of Zeus and Hera might correspond to Empedocles' concepts of dispute and friendship,[88] to the παλίντροπος ἁρμονία ("harmony of opposing forces") of Heraclitus[89] or to the fights between

[80] See Plu., *De Is*. 364A, 365C; *Qu. Rom*. 263E–F.
[81] See Plu., *Amat*. 770 A.
[82] See again *Amat*. 770A and fr. 105 Sandbach.
[83] See Plu., *De Is*. 371A.
[84] This negative principle related to the matter corresponds to the Platonic ἀπειρία in *Phlb*. 169C and to the ἀνάγκη in *Lg*. 896D.
[85] See Plu., *De def*. 414D.
[86] See Plu., *De Is*. 367A, 368D.
[87] See fr. 28 B 9 DK; Plu., *De E* 394A–B.
[88] See fr. 31A 45, B 115 DK; Plu., *De Is*. 370D.
[89] See fr. 22 B 51 DK On the lection παλίντροπος instead of παλίντονος of the Heraclitean fragment, see C. Diano & G. Serra (eds), *Eraclito. I frammenti e le testimonianze* (Milan 2000) 136–137; Ferrari & Baldi, *Plutarco. La generazione*, 316 n. 205.

Ormazd and Ahriman, the gods of the Zoroastrian dualism,[90] respectively of light and darkness, that Plutarch also deals with in the section of *On Isis and Osiris* devoted to the mythological representations of dualism in reality (369D–F). Indeed, the reference to light and darkness, life and death, war and peace, which was suitable for a mystical context like the ἱερὸς γάμος of Zeus and Hera and for the discussion that Plutarch was bringing forward on the meaning and exegesis of the myths, might recall the allusion to the cosmologic theories covered in the *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus*[91] and to the nature of the individual soul, which contains in itself those founding principles of the universe.[92]

From such a viewpoint, also the reference to Leto as "the shadow of the earth" (σκιὰ τῆς γῆς), could acquire a different meaning: Leto is the other face of Hera, the night covering the sky at sunset or provoking the eclipses of the Moon;[93] in *De Is*. 373E Typhon swallows Horos' eye and later gives it back to the Sun, which symbolically represents the moon falling into the umbra of the earth (σκιὰ τῆς γῆς), from which it comes out afterwards, when it is lighted again by the Sun;[94] also elsewhere (*De Is*. 368F) Typhon is defined σκίασμα τῆς γῆς. Similarly in the *On Love* Aphrodite Urania, worshipped in Thespiae is just one face of the goddess, the cult of which is attested in the city as *Melainis*, "Black" (chthonian)[95] by Pausanias (9.27.5).

Plutarch found several references to the recurrent catastrophes of mankind in the Platonic texts: in the *Timaeus* (22C–23A) he mentions many φθοραί ("destructions") which concerned men, either for an excess of fire, or because of floods; likewise in the *Critias* (111A–112A) there are hints to deluges which might have affected Attica in archaic times, long before the flood Deucalion survived. But it is especially the myth of the *Statesman* (272D–273E) which outlines thoroughly the alternate events of the cosmos.

A closer comparison between fr. 157 and *Pol*. 272D–273E may show more clearly how Plutarch rearranged traditional material both lexically and ideologically:

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[90] See Plu., *De Is*. 369D–370C. Ormazd represents the purest light he descended from, whilst Ahriman symbolizes darkness and ignorance. In *Amat*. 758F Plutarch uses the adjective ἀρειμάνιος with reference to the war mania inspired by Ares when he stirs mankind.

[91] On the dating of the work, see Ferrari & Baldi, *Plutarco. La generazione*, 11–12.

[92] See Plu., *De an. procr*. 1025C–E; 1026C–E.

[93] On the chthonian aspects of the Hera cult, see Lévêque & Séchan, *Les grandes divinités*, 183–184.

[94] See also fr. 201 Sandbach.

[95] See R. Scannapieco, "Afrodite e la luna", 435, n. 54.

Plu., fr. 157 Sandbach, 7

Ὁ μὲν οὖν μῦθος τοιοῦτος. ὁ δὲ λόγος αὐτοῦ τοιόσδε. Ἥρας καὶ Διὸς διαφορὰ καὶ στάσις οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν στοιχείων δυσκρασία καὶ τάραχός ἐστιν, ὅταν ἀλλήλοις μηκέτι συμμετρῆται κατὰ κόσμον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνωμαλίας καὶ τραχύτητος ἐγγενομένης δυσμαχήσαντα λύσῃ τὴν κοινωνίαν καὶ φθορὰν τῶν ὅλων ἀπεργάσηται. ἂν μὲν οὖν ὁ Ζεύς, τουτέστιν ἡ θερμὴ καὶ πυρώδης δύναμις, αἰτίαν παράσχῃ τῆς διαφθορᾶς, αὐχμὸς τὴν γῆν καταλαμβάνει· ἐὰν δὲ περὶ τὴν Ἥραν, τουτέστι τὴν ὑγρὰν καὶ πνευματικὴν φύσιν, ὕβρις τις ἢ πλεονασμὸς γένηται, ῥεῦμα ἦλθε πολὺ καὶ συνώμβρισε καὶ κατέκλυσε τὰ πάντα. Τοιούτου δέ τινος γενομένου καὶ περὶ τοὺς τότε χρόνους, καὶ μάλιστα τῆς Βοιωτίας βυθισθείσης, ὡς πρῶτον ἀνέδυ τὸ πεδίον καὶ ἡ πλήμμυρα ἐλωφησεν, ὁ μὲν ἐξ εὐδίας κόσμος τοῦ περιέχοντος ὁμόνοια καὶ διαλλαγὴ τῶν θεῶν ἐλέχθη. πρῶτον δ'ἀνέσχεν ἐκ τῆς γῆς τῶν φυτῶν ἡ δρῦς, καὶ ταύτην ἡγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, τροφὴν βίου καὶ σωτηρίας διαμονὴν παρασχοῦσαν.

Pl., *Pol.* 272D–273E

Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πάντων τούτων χρόνος ἐτελεώθη καὶ μεταβολὴν ἔδει γίγνεσθαι [...] 272E τότε δὴ τοῦ παντὸς ὁ μὲν κυβερνήτης, οἷον πηδαλίων οἴακος ἀφέμενος, εἰς τὴν αὑτοῦ περιωπὴν ἀπέστη, τὸν δὲ δὴ κόσμον πάλιν ἀνέστρεφεν εἱμαρμένη τε καὶ σύμφυτος ἐπιθυμία. [...] 273A ὁ δὲ μεταστρεφόμενος καὶ συμβάλλων, ἀρχῆς τε καῖ τελευτῆς ἐναντίαν ὁρμὴν ὁρμηθείς, σεισμὸν πολὺν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ποιῶν ἄλλην αὖ φθορὰν ζῴων παντοίων ἀπηργάσατο. Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα προελθόντος ἱκανοῦ χρόνου, θορύβων τε καὶ ταραχῆς ἤδη παυόμενος καὶ τῶν σεισμῶν γαλήνης ἐπιλαβόμενος εἴς τε τὸν εἰωθότα δρόμον τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κατακοσμούμενος ᾖει [...] 273C μετὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦ κυβερνήτου τὰ ζῷα τρέφων ἐν αὑτῷ σμικρὰ μὲν φλαῦρα, μεγάλα δὲ ἐνέτικτεν ἀγαθά· χωριζόμενος δὲ ἐκείνου τὸν ἐγγύτατα χρόνον ἀεὶ τῆς ἀφέσεως κάλλιστα πάντα διάγει, προϊόντος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ λήθης ἐγγιγνομένης ἐν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον καὶ δυναστεύει τὸ τῆς παλαιᾶς ἀναρμοστίας πάθος, 273D τελευτῶντος δὲ ἐξανθεῖ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ σμικρὰ μὲν τἀγαθά, πολλὴν δὲ τὴν τῶν ἐναντίων κρᾶσιν ἐπεγκεραννύμενος ἐπὶ διαφθορᾶς κίνδυνον αὑτοῦ τε ἀφικνεῖται καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ. Διὸ δὴ καὶ τότ' ἤδη θεὸς ὁ κοσμήσας αὐτόν, καθορῶν ἐν ἀπορίαις ὄντα, κηδόμενος ἵνα μὴ χειμασθεὶς ὑπὸ ταραχῆς διαλυθεὶς εἰς τὸν τῆς ἀνομοιότητος ἄπειρον ὄντα πόντον δύῃ, 273E πάλιν ἕφεδρος αὐτοῦ τῶν πηδαλίων γιγνόμενος, τὰ νοσήσαντα καὶ λυθέντα ἐν τῇ καθ'ἑαυτὸν προτέρᾳ περιόδῳ στρέψας, κοσμεῖ τε καὶ ἐπανορθῶν ἀθάνατον αὐτὸν καὶ ἀγήρων ἀπεργάζεται.

According to Plato, the age of Kronos was followed by a new era, when the cosmos made a new movement, in an opposite direction to the previous one, after being abandoned by the demiurge, who left it at the mercy of the εἱμαρμένη and the σύμφυτος ἐπιθυμία. Therefore the cosmos, a victim of the conflicting impulses of the ἀρχή ("beginning") and the τελευτή ("end"), engendered destruction (φθορά) of the living beings; once the uproars (θόρυβοι) and the disorder (ταραχή) were over, and the order was

restored (γαλήνη), the universe got back to its normal motion, trying to follow again the norm established by the demiurge. However, some traces of chaos and disorder still remain in the world, owing to the presence of the bodily part which shares the ancient ἀταξία ("muddle") and ἀναρμοστία ("discord"), previous to the ordering action. But the god, fearing the end of the cosmos owing to disorder, rearranged it by making it immortal.

In the *De an. procr.* 1014B Plutarch explains that the ἀναρμοστία ("discord") of the matter preceding the demiurge's rational ordering was due to the presence within it of the irrational soul, the εἱμαρμένη τε καὶ σύμφυτος ἐπιθυμία of *Pol.* 272E: it is the ἀνάγκη of *De an. procr.* 1015A which fights (δυσμαχοῦσα) against the god, like the four στοιχεῖα ("elements") that in fr. 157 are reported to fight with each other (δυσμαχήσαντα) when they are overcome by the ἀνωμαλία ("irregularity") and ταραχύτης ("turbulence"), or like the Evil force starting the cosmic fight (δυσμαχοῦσα) against Good in *De Is.* 371A. Therefore, in fragment 157 the διαφθορά ("destruction") of the universe should be attributed to the prevalence of the σύμφυτος ἐπιθυμία ("innate desire") which is expressed here through the αὐχμός ("drought") or through the ῥεῦμα … πολύ ("great flood").

The δυσκρασία (("disturbance") of the elements) mentioned by Plutarch recalls the expression of *Pol.* 273D πολλὴν δὲ τὴν τῶν ἐναντίων κρᾶσιν ἐπεγκεραννύμενος ("combining a great variety of opposites"); their τάραχος ("disturbance") corresponds to the θόρυβοί τε καὶ ταραχή in 273A; the sequence ὅταν … λύσῃ echoes the διαλυθείς and the λυθέντα in 273D, while φθορὰν τῶν ὅλων ἀπεργάσηται recalls φθορὰν ζῴων παντοίων ἀπηργάσατο in 273A. As regards lexical items, Plato draws on the metaphor cosmos-ship: in the absence of his κυβερνήτης—the demiurge god—prey to the ἐπιθυμία ("desire") it runs the risk of sinking among the waves of disorder.[96] The

[96] The presence in this context of the word διαφθορά, by which Plato means the risk of destruction within the universe itself if disorder prevails, reinforces the hypothesis that in the Plutarchean text ἂν μὲν οὖν ὁ Ζεύς, τουτέστιν ἡ θερμὴ καὶ πυρώδης δύναμις, αἰτίαν παράσχῃ τῆς διαφθορᾶς, αὐχμὸς τὴν γῆν καταλαμβάνει the genitive διαφθορᾶς (see above, n. 64) is correct, especially if interpreted in the sense of μεταβολή, as it could be suggested by the Stoic use of the word φθορά attested in *SVF* II 596. Plutarch in *De E* 388F–389B too reminds that the god is subject to μεταβολαί, thus becoming either πῦρ or assuming the endless aspects of the κόσμος; the two faces of the god are hidden within the names which the god is given and within the events that the gods experience in the myths. For instance, when the god is fire, he is called Apollo or Phoebus; when he becomes cosmos, he is called Dionysus (or Zagreus or Nyktelios or Isodaites), since the dismemberment of this god represents the disappearances due to corruption, φθοράς τινας καὶ ἀφανισμούς, and the rebirths, ἀναβιώσεις καὶ παλιγγενεσίας (see also 393C). The Plutarchean interpretation of the contrasts between Zeus and Hera perfectly

metaphoric language, which becomes more frequent in the last part of the argument, already appears with reference to the tiller abandoned by the god (272E)–which is held again at the end of the myth (273E)—and with the use of γαλήνη in 273A to suggest the balance recovered after disorder; on the other hand, the use of this image was quite predictable, due to the reference to floods, tangible signs of the cosmos overwhelmed by the irrational power, compared to the control re-established by the god. A sign of this metaphor is the participle βυθισθείσης which Plutarch relates to Boeotia flooded, which refers to the same semantic field of the Platonic χειμασθείς (273D). Finally, Plato resorts to the verb δύω to indicate the cosmos plunging into disorder, whereas Plutarch concludes his account with the world re-emerging from floodwaters (ἀνέδυ).

Also the detail of the oak resurfacing at the end of the fragment, seems to hint at the end of myth in the *Statesman* where the author outlines the condition of contemporary man: after the cataclysm he lost the privileges which made Kronos' age a sort of "age of gold" and needed gifts such as fire, plants and seeds to keep himself alive. In fact, the Plutarchean expression ἐκ τῆς γῆς τῶν φυτῶν ἡ δρῦς might refer to the generic τὰ φυτά of *Pol.* 274D, maybe due to the requirement to recall the key role of the ξόανον obtained from the oak, which is burned in the myth and in the rite of the feasts in Plataea to pledge the complete reconciliation between the two gods. In particular, the final quotation of Hesiod, *Op.* 233,[97] where the importance of the oak and its fruits is stressed for all the survivors, not just for the εὐσεβεῖς, in my opinion could be a way to highlight the mercy of a god rewarding anyone, if compared to the Hesiodean model, where the fruits of the oak are reserved only to the righteous.

The myth narrated in the fr. 157, ending with the reconciliation, and the rite of Plataea that evoked it through exorcizing the danger of a new cataclysm, were likely to strengthen the community's hope for the victory of Good over Evil, despite the temporary defeats of *logos* and harmony: the cataclysms are followed by new eras of calm, just like in the *On Isis and Osiris* where death and sorrow are overcome by rebirth and by the promise of eternal joy of the spirit, as promised by the rites, and the fight between Osiris and Seth-Typhon is always won by the former. If Good and Evil can

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suits the statements reported in *De E*, where he also asserts that oracles, symbols, myths and cults obscurely allude to the nature of divinity; this way the god generates doubt and encourages who is philosopher by nature to seize the truth concealed therein (see Plu., *De E* 384F and above, n. 21).

[97] Hesiod, *Op.* 233: ἄκρη μέν τε φέρει βαλάνους, μέσση δὲ μελίσσας.

never be separated, yet Plutarch is certain that in the fight between light and darkness, Hades will finally be defeated and men, blessed by that time, will no longer be subject to matter nor will cast shadows (*De Is.* 370B–C), because the prevalence between the opposing forces is reserved for Good.

In order to fulfill this hope, in *The Daedalian feasts in Plataea* Plutarch resorts to the platonic philosophy[98] of the *Statesman* and to the different levels of exegesis of the myth; however, he reserves for ordinary people the collective experience of the rite or of marriage;[99] for the couple this is evidence of the caring presence of the god, through the charm of the ritual acts and their symbology. Once again, the smile of a reconciled Hera acquires a symbolical meaning within the rite, expanding to mystical dimensions: the bridal procession takes place μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ γέλωτος ("with joy and laughter"), the clearest symbol of the god's benevolence to the cosmos he regulated with φιλία,[100] the survival of which he always guarantees. It is not without reason that the *On Love* also ends with the bridal procession of Bacchon and Ismenodora, finally acknowledged and approved by Thespiae's community, and accompanied by the protective smile of Eros χαίρων καὶ … εὐμενής or "joyful and well-disposed" (771E).

[98] See Plu., *De E* 394A–B.

[99] On the consolatory function of the religious ceremonies aimed at—along with the images and the hidden meanings of the events represented—men and women who had experienced the same misfortunes as Isis and Osiris, see *De Is.* 361D–E; this is a most representative passage to understand the sense attributed to the cult of these gods in the imperial age, which is an expression of what has been called "theology of need": see W. Nestle, *Storia della religiosità greca* (Florence 1973) 352; S. Nicosia (ed.), *Elio Aristide. Discorsi sacri* (Milan 1984) 43–44.

[100] See Plu., *De an. procr.* 1017A.

A NON-FIDEISTIC INTERPRETATION OF ΠΙΣΤΙΣ IN PLUTARCH'S WRITINGS: THE HARMONY BETWEEN ΠΙΣΤΙΣ AND KNOWLEDGE

George van Kooten

1. *Introduction*

In this paper I would like to challenge the straightforward applicability of modern categories such as "belief" in the study of ancient philosophers such as Plutarch, and early Christians such as Paul. It seems possible that the modern concept of "belief", the English rendition of πίστις, is heavily indebted to a particular Christianizing interpretation, that of Luther, who took πίστις for the central notion in Christianity. His emphasis on faith was then subsequently reinforced in Kantian philosophy, in which belief, as the characteristic of religion, became opposed to knowledge, as the hallmark of philosophy.[1] Contemporary philosophers also see "belief" as anti-philosophical. The modern philosopher Alain Badiou, for instance, emphasizes the anti-philosophical nature of Paul's concept of πίστις in terms of proclamation and declaration. According to Badiou, Paul's "discourse is one of pure fidelity to the possibility opened by the event. It cannot, therefore, in any way (and this is the upshot of Paul's anti-philosophy) fall under the remit of knowledge".[2] Yet, in some New Testament scholarship it has been suggested that πίστις also has an argumentative quality. This gives rise to the question of whether Paul's terminology can be contextualized in the philosophy of his time. Is the concept of πίστις unique to Paul? Is it specifically Christian? Do ancient philosophers contemporary with Paul use the term, and if so, in what sense?

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[1] Cf. the vies of Novalis and Von Baader, on whom see U. Dierse, "Glauben und Wissen II", in J. Ritter (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, 3 (Basel 1974) 648–649: "Wie Novalis führt F. von Baader den Zwiespalt von Glauben und Wissen auf einen von der Reformation verursachten "Verfall" zurück, der nur behoben werden kann, wenn zwischen Glauben und Wissen wieder ein "normales und einträchtiges Verhalten" hergestellt wird".

[2] A. Badiou, *Saint Paul. La fondation de l'universalisme* (Paris 1997); idem, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (transl. by Ray Brassier; Stanford 2003) 45.

This paper calls attention to the uneven approach to the interpretation of the terminology of πίστις and πιστεύειν in New Testament and early Christian sources on the one hand, and ancient philosophical sources on the other. When this terminology occurs in early Christian texts it is usually rendered in a "fideistic" way as "belief" and "to believe". Translations of the same terminology in ancient philosophical texts, however, acquire a broad variety of meanings. The undesirable result is that early Christian sources have become disconnected from their natural habitat in the ancient world at large. Although there is an increasing awareness (a) that this belief/knowledge divide is undesirable (Folkers), (b) that a purely Jewish background of "belief" (as advocated by Lohse) is insufficient and needs to be broadened to include its interaction with the Graeco-Roman world (Hay; Kinneavy; Downing) and (c) that Christian sources express not only an interest in faith but also in knowledge (Dupont; Schenke; Bouyer), as yet there is no comprehensive analysis of the concept of πίστις in contemporary Graeco-Roman sources.[3]

If we compare the occurrences of πίστις and πιστεύειν in authors such as Paul and the prolific second-century CE pagan philosopher Plutarch, we see that this terminology is also very frequent in the latter's voluminous *Moralia*.[4] In some contexts, this terminology has what we would now call a "religious", "fideistic" meaning, for instance when Plutarch talks about "believing all the mythological tales" (*De frat. amor*. 483C). In other contexts outside the field of religion, this meaning of uncritical, unfounded faith also occurs in political matters, or with regard to issues in poetry.

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[3] F.G. Downing, "Ambiguity, Ancient Semantics, and Faith", *NTS* 56 (2010): 139–162; H. Folkers, "Wissen und Glauben", *NZThR* 43 (2001) 208–235; D.M. Hay, "Pistis as 'Ground for Faith' in Hellenized Judaism and Paul", *JBL* 108 (1989) 461–476; L. Bouyer, *Gnôsis: La connaissance de Dieu dans l'Écriture* (Paris 1988); J.L. Kinneavy, *Greek Rhetorical Origins of Christian Faith: An Inquiry* (Oxford 1987); W. Schenke, *Glaube als Erkenntnis: Das Grundwissen des Christen nach dem Neuen Testament* (Berlin 1983); and E. Lohse, "Emuna und pistis—jüdisches und urchristliches Verständnis des Glaubens", *ZNW* 68 (1977) 147–163; J. Dupont, *Gnosis: La connaissance religieuse dans les épîtres de Saint Paul* (Leuven 1949).

[4] On Plutarch and πίστις, see also F. Frazier, "Platonisme et *Patrios pistis* dans le discours central de l' Érotikos (chs 13–20)", in A. Pérez Jiménez et al. (eds), *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles. Actas del V Congresso Internacional de la I.P.S. (Madrid-Cuenca, 4–7 de Mayo de 1999)* (Madrid 1999) 343–356; idem, "Göttlichkeit und Glaube: Persönliche Gottesbeziehung im Spätwerk Plutarchs", in R. Hirsch-Luipold (ed.), *Gott und die Götterbei Plutarch: Götterbilder—Gottesbilder—Weltbilder* (Berlin 2005) 111–137; and idem, "Philosophie et religion dans la pensée de Plutarque. Quelques réflexions autour des emplois du mot πίστις", *Études platoniciennes* 5 (2008) 41–61.

A different meaning, however, is found when πίστις occurs in lists of virtues, acquires the meaning of trust in a relational sense, or is even regarded as an act of "persuasion" in a rhetorical strategy. Most remarkable, however, is the way in which Plutarch can also speak of "believing" in philosophical statements (*Consol. ad ux*. 611D) or "believing" that philosophers such as Socrates were true philosophers—a belief which is founded upon their acts, words and lives (*De Alex. fort*. 328B). Plutarch even talks of "belief" in figures such as Homer and Pythagoras. Most relevant are those passages in which Plutarch frequently emphasizes that "our belief (πίστις) in all our notions, except those derived from the senses, comes from three sources: myth, law, and rational explanation; so it is undoubtedly the poets, the legislators, and thirdly the philosophers who have been our guides and teachers in what we think about the gods" (*Amat*. 763C). It is important to note that, according to ancient philosophers such as Plutarch, belief is not by definition anti-philosophical, but only so if it remains on a mythological level. According to Plutarch, faith needs to be rescued from the merely mythological level and strengthened with philosophical reflection (*De adulat*. 35F). It is apparent that according to Paul's pagan contemporaries faith is not in itself anti-philosophical; there are two kinds of belief, an "unskillful faith" (literally an ἄτεχνος πίστις) and a "strengthened faith".[5]

2. *The "Religious" Meaning of* Πίστις

First, then, I shall discuss those passages in Plutarch in which πίστις seems to acquire the meaning familiar to modern ears, of faith in a fideistic sense, in other words, of an unfounded religious faith as opposed to knowledge. In Plutarch's treatise on brotherly love, for instance, he argues, among other things, how we should conduct ourselves towards a brother while our parents are alive or dead:

> After the father is dead, however, even more than before it is right for the brother to cling fast to his brother's goodwill … believing all the mythological tales about the brotherly love of the Dioscuri (… καὶ πιστεύοντα τοῖς τ' ἄλλοις ἃ μυθολογοῦσι περὶ τῶν Διοσκόρων τῆς φιλαδελφίας) and in particular the one which relates that Polydeuces killed with a blow of his fist a man who whispered to him something against his brother.[6]

[5] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 725C.
[6] Plu., *De frat. amor*. 483C.

In this passage it seems clear that what one does with regard to mythological tales is "to believe them".

The same impression is given in another passage in Plutarch's essay *On Isis and Osiris*, which talks about the *hoi polloi* ("ordinary people"), whom he describes as tiresome, and who delight in associating aspects of the gods with particular phenomena in reality, either "with the seasonal changes in the surrounding atmosphere, or with the growth of the crops and seedtimes and ploughing".[7] Examples given by Plutarch are the burial of Osiris, which is associated with the sowing of the grain and his coming to life when plants begin to sprout, and the premature birth of Harpocrates by Isis at the time of the first fruits.[8] According to Plutarch:

> When the people hear these things, they are satisfied with them and believe them (ταῦτα γὰρ ἀκούοντες ἀγαπῶσι καὶ πιστεύουσιν), deducing the plausible explanation directly from what is obvious and familiar.[9]

Clearly, then, it are *hoi polloi* who believe in things regarding the gods and associate them with visible reality, which is explained with reference to the world of the gods.

Again, another text on superstition seems to communicate that belief is equivalent to superstition and opposed to atheism. Whereas belief is the domain of the superstitious person, atheism is the domain of supposing, thinking and opinion. As Plutarch writes:

> The atheist thinks there are no gods; the superstitious man wishes there were none, but believes in them against his will; for he is afraid not to believe. (Οὐκ οἴεται θεοὺς εἶναι ὁ ἄθεος, ὁ δὲ δεισιδαίμων οὐ βούλεται, πιστεύει δ' ἄκων: φοβεῖται γὰρ ἀπιστεῖν) … he [i.e., the atheist] would call the condition of the atheist happy because it is a state of freedom. But, as things are, the atheist has neither part nor lot in superstition, whereas the superstitious man by preference would be an atheist, but is too weak to hold the opinion about the gods which he wishes to hold [i.e., the atheist position] … (ἀσθενέστερός ἐστιν ἢ ὥστε δοξάζειν περὶ θεῶν ὃ βούλεται).[10]

The atheist position is thus described, in a surprisingly "modern" way, in terms of "thinking" and "holding the opinion (δοξάζειν) about the gods (περὶ θεῶν)", whereas the superstitious position is described in terms of "believing". Seemingly in line with this is the criticism which Plutarch voices

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[7] Plu., *De Is.* 377B.
[8] Plu., *De Is.* 377B–C.
[9] Plu., *De Is.* 377C.
[10] Plu., *De superst.* 170F.

of those who demand demonstration and proof regarding issues which pertain to the gods. When one of the interlocutors in Plutarch's dialogue *On Love*, a certain Pemptides, questions whether Love is indeed a god and challenges Plutarch to hear from him "what criterion those who first declared Eros to be a god had in mind when they made the statement",[11] Plutarch unleashes the following attack, as his son Autobulus relates in the dialogue:

> "Pemptides", he said, "it is, I believe, a grave and dangerous matter that you are broaching; or rather, you are altogether violating our inviolable opinion regarding the gods[12] when you demand an account and proof of each of them (μᾶλλον δ' ὅλως τὰ ἀκίνητα κινεῖν τῆς περὶ θεῶν δόξης ἧν ἔχομεν, περὶ ἑκάστου λόγου ἀπαιτῶν καὶ ἀπόδειξιν). Our ancient traditional faith is good enough (ἀρκεῖ γὰρ ἡ πάτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις). It is impossible to assert or discover evidence more palpable than this faith, 'Whatever subtle twist's invented by keen wit' (E., *Ba.* 203). This faith is a basis, as it were, a common foundation, of reverence towards the gods[13] (ἀλλ' ἕδρα τις αὕτη καὶ βάσις ὑφεστῶσα κοινὴ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν); if confidence and settled usage are disturbed or shaken at a single point, the whole edifice is enfeebled and discredited".[14]

Whereas Pemptides demands an account and proof (ἀπόδειξις) of—the actual divinity of—each of the gods, Plutarch wishes to stick to "the inviolable opinion (δόξα) regarding the gods which we hold", which he characterizes as ἡ πάτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις, "the ancestral and ancient faith", and which functions, as he says, as what should be regarded as a common foundation for piety.[15] In this passage, πίστις seems to acquire a strongly fideistic color. Pemptides is rebuked for questioning this ancient faith by his request for proof and demonstration of what, in Plutarch's mind, should be common knowledge of the gods, in this case of the god of Love, Eros. Hence, Plutarch asks Pemptides:

> So what is to be gained by the use of argument (λόγος) to make our opinion (δόξα)[16] regarding Zeus or Athena or Eros debatable or uncertain. Love is not now requesting his first altar and sacrifice. He is no alien intruder from some

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[11] Plu., *Amat.* 756A.

[12] W.C. Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, IX (Cambridge 1969) 347, confusingly and rather anachronistically, reads "our inviolable belief in the gods".

[13] Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, IX, 347, translates *eusebeia* as "religion", thus pushing the virtue of piety into a specific religious post-Kantian domain.

[14] Plu., *Amat.* 756A–B.

[15] On Plutarch and *patrios pistis*, see Frazier, "Platonisme et *Patrios pistis*".

[16] Helmbold, ibid. again translates δόξα as "belief": "So what is to be gained by the use of argument to make our belief in Zeus or Athena or Eros debatable or uncertain?"

> barbaric superstition (ἐκ τινος βαρβαρικῆς δεισιδαιμονίας) … He does not … smuggle himself in to reap a harvest of honours to which he has no right.[17]

In other words, the reverence for Eros is not newly invented but is respectable and ancient, is distinguished from barbaric superstition and should, for these reasons, need no additional proof. Demanding such proofs, Plutarch argues against Pemptides, is a sign of one's sophistic inclinations:

> If you are going to demand a proof (τεκμήριον)[18] of each one of them [i.e., of each one of the gods], probing every temple and attacking each altar with sophistic assault, not a god will you exempt from malicious prosecution and inquisition.[19]

Moreover, if one questions the existence of the gods and interprets them in terms of virtues and other qualities which they symbolically embody (as do the Stoics, according to Plutarch), the request for additional proofs is even a sign of atheism:

> You surely perceive the abyss of atheism that engulfs us if we list each several god on a roster of emotions, functions, and virtues.[20]

Plutarch's defense of the πάτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις ("the ancestral and ancient faith") reads, in modern eyes, exactly as one would expect from a fideistic understanding of πίστις. It is traditional, ancient, without argumentative value, and resists further proofs and demonstration.

We find a somewhat similar passage in Plutarch's treatise *On Isis and Osiris*, in which Plutarch criticizes the Euhemeristic reductionism of traditional faith which, in his view, was already "implanted in nearly all mankind at birth". Having given a Euhemeristic interpretation of aspects of Egyptian religion,[21] Plutarch expresses his hesitation as follows, defending again, as in his *On Love*, the trustworthiness of ancient faith:

> I hesitate, lest this be the moving of things immovable and not only "warring against the long years of time", as Simonides has it, but warring, too, against "many a nation and race of men" who are possessed by a feeling of piety (ὁσιότης) towards these gods, and thus we should not stop short of transplanting such names from the heavens to the earth, and eliminating and dissipating

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[17] Plu., *Amat.* 756C.

[18] According to LSJ 1768 τεκμήριον II, proof, properly of an argumentative kind, as opposed to direct evidence.

[19] Plu., *Amat.* 756D.

[20] Plu., *Amat.* 757B–C.

[21] On Plutarch's interpreting strategies, see in this volume chapter 3, by R. Scannapieco, 193–214.

> the reverence and faith (πίστις) implanted in nearly all mankind at birth, opening wide the great doors to the atheistic throng, degrading things divine to the human level, and giving a splendid licence to the deceitful utterances of Euhemerus of Messene.[22]

Interestingly, whereas Plutarch defends the faith (πίστις) which is "implanted in nearly all mankind at birth", he criticizes Euhemerus for erecting a straw man for his Euhemeristic interpretation by first developing an incredible, untrustworthy (ἄπιστος) mythology which he subsequently sets out to criticize:

> … Euhemerus of Messene … of himself drew up copies of an incredible and non-existent mythology, and spread atheism over the whole inhabited earth by obliterating the gods of our belief and converting them all alike into names of generals, admirals, and kings, who, forsooth, lived in very ancient times and are recorded in inscriptions written in golden letters at Panchon, which no foreigner and no Greek had ever happened to meet with, save only Euhemerus.[23]

In this way the trustworthy πίστις of ancient tradition is contrasted with the incredible, untrustworthy, tendentious inventions of Euhemerus. Nevertheless, this seems to be the only justification which Plutarch appears to give for his otherwise apparently fideistic notion of πίστις. Yet other passages make clear that his understanding of πίστις is rather more subtle than meets the modern, anachronistic, post-Kantian eye. As is clear in some of the passages discussed above, and which is rendered even more clearly in a further passage not yet discussed, Plutarch takes care to distinguish πίστις from mere superstition (δεισιδαιμονία) and uses it effectively as a synonym for ἡ περὶ θεῶν δόξα ("the opinion regarding the gods"). In his treatise *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*, Plutarch has Aristodemus arguing against the Epicureans, claiming that their theory, although removing the anxiety caused by superstitious fear of the gods, "allows no joy and delight to come to us from the gods".[24] Instead, Aristodemus states:

> … it is better that our opinion about the gods (ἡ περὶ θεῶν δόξα) should include an intermixture of a certain emotion that is part reverence and part fear, than that, by trying to escape this, we should leave ourselves no hope of divine favour, no confidence in prosperity, and in adversity no refuge in God. Now we should, I grant you, remove superstition (δεισιδαιμονία) from our opinion about the gods (ἡ περὶ θεῶν δόξα) like a rheum from the eye; but if this proves

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22 Plu., *De Is.* 359F–360A.
23 Plu., *De Is.* 360A.
24 Plu., *Non poss.* 1101A.

> impossible, we should not cut away both together (μηδὲ τυφλοῦν τὴν πίστιν, ἣν οἱ πλεῖστοι περὶ θεῶν ἔχουσιν), and blind the faith (πίστις) that most men have in the gods.[25]

In this passage it is Plutarch's clearly stated intention to distinguish between superstition on the one hand, and opinion about and belief in the gods on the other. Using the imagery of eye surgery during which rheum is removed, he states that if it is impossible to carry out such an operation, care should be taken against drastic action by which not only the rheum (that is, superstition) is removed, but the eye itself (that is, faith or belief in the gods) is severely damaged and blinded.

In the various passages discussed above Plutarch shows himself very protective of faith, both against Euhemeristic and Epicurean ways of thinking. Although superstition should ideally be separated from belief in the gods, Plutarch, in the interest of faith, is reluctant to emphasize this too strongly as faith may also fall victim and become seriously wounded. However, in other contexts in which Plutarch is not so deeply involved in anti-Epicurean polemics, he is indeed interested in purging belief and saving it from false and fabulous representations of the gods in poetry. In this way it is possible to strengthen faith:

> … just as in what we have said above we felt that by setting against cheap and harmful poems the sayings and maxims of men of repute and statesmen, we were inducing a revolt and revulsion of faith (πίστις) from such poetry, so whenever we find any edifying sentiment neatly expressed in the poets we ought to foster and amplify it by means of proofs and testimonies from the philosophers … For this is right and useful, and our faith gains an added strength and dignity (ἰσχὺν τῆς πίστεως καὶ ἀξίωμα προσλαμβανούσης) whenever the doctrines of Pythagoras and of Plato are in agreement with what is spoken on the stage or sung to the lyre or studied at school …[26]

Apparently, according to Plutarch it is possible for faith to acquire "added strength and dignity". Although he defends "the ancestral and ancient faith" in a rather fideistic way, over against those who demand proof of the gods, at the same time his actual concept of faith appears to allow for additional strengthening. Indeed, as we shall see, in Plutarch's view there are two kinds of faith: misfounded and strengthened faith.

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[25] Plu., *Non poss.* 1101B–C.
[26] Plu., *De adulat.* 35E–F.

3. *Two Forms of* Πίστις*: Misfounded Faith and Strengthened Faith*

It is stated or implied in several passages that faith takes two forms. For example, in *Table-Talks*, Plutarch refers to a particular story as ἕν τι τῶν εἰκῇ πεπιστευμένων ("one of those stories that gain credence without good grounds").[27] Apparently some things gain credence and are believed on good grounds, while others are believed without good grounds. Hence, faith may be justifiable or not. Similarly, in his *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, Plutarch has someone say that "a good many things, come to be believed quite contrary to fact" (πολλά … πιστεύεται ψευδῶς).[28] Consequently, it is also possible to induce firm belief in one's cause, or fail to do so. For example, in the context of his discussion of ill will in the writing of history, Plutarch distinguishes between sophists and true historians; whereas the former "are not really inducing any firm belief in their cause (οὐ γὰρ ἐμποιοῦσι πίστιν ἰσχυρὰν περὶ τοῦ πράγματος) and … may even admit that they are trying to startle people by a defense of the incredible", the historian "declares as true what he knows to be the case and, when the facts are not clear, says that the more creditable appears to be the true account rather than the less creditable".[29] The point for our present discussion is that Plutarch does not take πίστις in a fideistic sense to the extent that everyone can claim that his πίστις is as good as that of everyone else, but differentiates between πίστις which is strong (ἰσχυρά) and πίστις which lacks this quality. Hence, there are two forms of πίστις, strong belief and, by implication, weak belief. Elsewhere in his writings Plutarch explicitly calls the latter an ἄτεχνος πίστις, "an unskillful, unprofessional, or unsystematic faith",[30] rendered in the Loeb translation as "a layman's faith".[31] The topic of the passage in question is very specific, but what is important is that in this section it appears possible to bolster this "layman's faith" with the confirmation of a specific, professional experience. The background to this notion of ἄτεχνος πίστις is Aristotle's rhetorical theory, in which he differentiates between ἄτεχνος πίστις—proofs which are not invented by the orator—and proofs which are. According to Aristotle:

> … rhetoric we look upon as the power of observing the means of persuasion on almost any subject presented to us … Of the modes of persuasion some

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[27] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 624A.
[28] Plu., *Sept. sap. conv*. 151F.
[29] Plu., *De Her. malig*. 855E–F.
[30] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 725B.
[31] E.L. Minar, *Plutarch's Moralia*, IX (Cambridge 1969) 155.

> are technical, others non-technical (τῶν δὲ πίστεων αἱ μὲν ἄτεχνοί εἰσιν αἱ δ' ἔντεχνοι). By the latter I mean such things as are not supplied by the speaker but are there at the outset—witnesses, evidence given under torture, written contracts, and so on. By the former I mean such as we can ourselves construct by means of the principles of rhetoric. The one kind has merely to be used, the other has to be invented.[32]

This rhetorical concept of ἄτεχνος πίστις is now applied by Plutarch in a wider sense of "a layman's faith", which can still be bolstered by an additional argumentation.[33] This is indeed how we have come to understand Plutarch's notion of πίστις. Contrary to the first impression given by some passages, which seemed to suggest, when read in a post-Kantian light, that Plutarch's understanding of πίστις is rather fideistic, on closer scrutiny Plutarch appears to be of the opinion that it is possible for the right, justifiable kind of faith to gain "an added strength and dignity" and to be bolstered by further argumentation. What is already noticeable in various passages is that πίστις has such an argumentative potential that it can also be translated as "persuasion". This is also the case for Aristotle's rhetorical theory, in which ἔντεχνοι πίστεις and ἄτεχνοι πίστεις are "proofs" which are or are not invented by the speaker, respectively.

4. Πίστις *as Persuasion*

It is apparent from Plutarch's writings that πίστις has such an argumentative potential that, if successful, and contrasted with mere opinions, it can also be translated as "persuasion". In his essay *Concerning Talkativeness*, Plutarch censures chatterers, who "keep their mouths without lock or door", and hence:

> … appear to regard speech as the least valuable of all things. They do not, therefore, meet with belief, which is the object of all speech (Ὅθεν οὐδὲ πίστιν ἔχουσιν ἧς πᾶς λόγος ἐφίεται). For this is the proper end and aim of speech,

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[32] Arist., *Rh.* 1355b35; See 1375a22. The notion is also applied by Philo in *De spec. leg.* 4.40.

[33] A similar wider application occurs in Numenius, fr. 26.84–90 (*apud* Eus., *PE* 14.7.12): "And Lacydes for a while was at a loss, seeing that the support of his own doctrines was of no help to him; and thinking that, if he could not convict them, everything he had would be upset, he fell into perplexity, and began to cry out upon his neighbours and upon the gods, Oh! Oh! and Alas! Alas! and By all the gods, and By the goddesses, and all the other artless affirmations of men who in cases of distrust take to strong language (ἄλλαι τε ὅσαι ἐν ἀπιστίαις δεινολογουμένων εἰσὶν ἄτεχνοι πίστεις)–all these were uttered with loud shouting and asseveration". Trans. E.H. Gifford, *Eusebii Pamphili Evangelicae praeparationis libri XV* (Oxford 1903).

> to engender belief in the hearer (τὸ γὰρ οἰκεῖον αὐτοῦ τέλος τοῦτ' ἐστί, πίστιν ἐνεργάσασθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσιν). But chatterers are disbelieved even if they are telling the truth (ἀπιστοῦνται δ' οἱ λάλοι, κἂν ἀληθεύωσιν). For as wheat shut up in a jar is found to have increased in quantity, but to have deteriorated in quality, so when a story finds its way to a chatterer, it generates a large addition of falsehood and thereby destroys its credit (ᾧ διαφθείρει τὴν πίστιν).[34]

In this passage, πίστις is indeed concerned with the rhetorical act of persuading and being persuaded. It is about meeting with belief, engendering belief in the hearer or, conversely, about credit being destroyed. In this light the following passage from Plutarch's anti-Epicurean *Reply to Colotes* is also relevant. Here Plutarch also quotes from the Proem of Parmenides' well-known hexameter poem, in which Truth is sharply contrasted with "the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true persuasion".[35] The goddess Dike addresses Parmenides as he approaches her on his heavenly journey:

> Young man, you who come to my house in the company of immortal charioteers with the mares which bear you, greetings. No ill fate has sent you to travel this road—far indeed does it lie from the steps of men—but right and justice. It is proper that you should learn all things, both the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no πίστις ἀληθής, no true reliance.[36]

According to Plutarch, who quotes from this Proem, the criteria of Parmenides' world-view are:

> "The unerring heart of most persuasive Truth" which deals with what is intelligible and forever unalterably the same, "And man's beliefs, that lack all true persuasion" because they consort with objects admitting all manner of changes, accidents, and irregularities.[37]

As in the previous passage from Plutarch's *Concerning Talkativeness* (503D), πίστις acquires the meaning of persuasion, reliance and trustworthiness. All these meanings revolve around the centrality of trust, which is the best way to render πίστις in various passages. "Persuasion" and "trust" appear to be closely related because they are realized in relationships: people are persuaded and are persuasive because they trust and are trusted; and vice versa, they trust because they have been persuaded by someone's

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[34] Plu., *De garr.* 503D.

[35] Plu., *Adv. Col.* 1114D–E.

[36] Translation by S. Kirk – J.E. Raven & M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: a Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge ^{2}1983), fr. 288 (B. Einarson & Ph.H De Lacy, *Plutarch's Moralia*, XIV [London–Cambridge 1967] 233 translate "no true persuasion").

[37] Plu., *Adv. Col.* 1114D–E.

trustworthiness, for example on the authority of someone's great wisdom. This we can we deduce from the following examples.

5. *Πίστις in the Sense of Trust*

That πίστις is about trust which is realized in relation to other people who appear to be trustworthy, transpires readily from a passage in Plutarch's *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, which quotes the following remark from Thales of Milete:

> … Thales is responsible also for this sage remark, that one should not believe enemies, even about things believable, and should believe friends even about things unbelievable (δεῖ τοῖς μὲν ἐχθροῖς καὶ περὶ τῶν πιστῶν ἀπιστεῖν, τοῖς δὲ φίλοις καὶ τὰ ἄπιστα πιστεύειν).[38]

The concept of πίστις is here clearly placed in the context of relationships through which people believe or trust others because of their trustworthiness as friends. Consequently, in other passages Plutarch talks, for example, of not putting faith in Epicurus: "For one thing, not one of us would put faith in Epicurus when he says that …" (Ἐπικούρῳ μὲν οὐδ' ἂν εἷς ἡμῶν πιστεύσειεν ὅτι),[39] or of putting one's confidence in Homer rather than Aristotle. The latter clash of authorities occurs when Plutarch becomes involved in a very specific discussion concerning the question of why fresh water rather than sea water is used to wash clothes. Whereas one of the other speakers, Theon, rebukes Plutarch for talking nonsense and appeals to the authority of Aristotle, who says something relevant regarding this issue, Plutarch answers as follows:

> "He does say so", I replied, "but I thought you would put your confidence rather in Homer, who implies the opposite (ἀλλ' ᾤμην σε μᾶλλον σε μᾶλλον Ὁμήρῳ τἀναντία λέγοντι πιστεύσειν)".[40]

Apparently, Homer's authority is to be trusted, an appeal which can be found elsewhere in Plutarch's writings, including in his *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, where he has Solon say on a particular issue:

> Well, then, we should have faith in the very great wisdom of Homer who also says … ("οὐκοῦν," ἔφη, "καὶ τῷ σοφωτάτῳ πιστευτέον Ὁμήρῳ …").[41]

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[38] Plu., *Sep. sap. conv*. 160E.
[39] Plu., *Non poss*. 1099D.
[40] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 627E.
[41] Plu., *Sept. sap. conv*. 164D.

Homer's very great wisdom here is something which persuades people to trust him and to be persuaded by him. In this way persuasion and trust are closely linked and this variety of meanings which πίστις acquires shows that Plutarch does not understand it in a fideistic sense, as something like blind faith. As we have seen thus far, πίστις is something which can be further strengthened and it is part of a process of persuasion and trust. It comes as no surprise then, that in Plutarch's view there is no innate opposition or tension between πίστις and philosophy.

6. *The Philosophical Use of* πίστις *and* πιστεύειν

Indeed, if πίστις is not a fideistic notion but is about persuasion and trust, there is nothing to impede its application to philosophical contexts. A very moving example of such an application is found in Plutarch's *Consolation to his Wife*, written on the occasion of the death of one of their children, Timoxena. Plutarch, being absent from home, writes instructions to his wife and, although fully confident of his wife's strength, sketches the possible intrusion of two different groups. Firstly, he mentions the "pernicious women" who might attempt to visit the bereaved, uttering cries and lamentations, "adding fire to fire".[42] Secondly, he mentions the Epicureans, whose solace is their message that death is nothing to humanity but the dissolution of which human beings are unaware. Plutarch tells his wife that she is neither susceptible to the influence of the "pernicious women", nor to that of the Epicureans:

> You doubtless hear the statements of that other set, who win many to their way of thinking when they say that nothing is in any way evil or painful to "what has undergone dissolution" (Καὶ μὴν ἃ τῶν ἄλλων ἀκούεις, οἳ πείθουσι πολλοὺς λέγοντες ὡς οὐδὲν οὐδαμῇ τῷ διαλυθέντι κακὸν οὐδὲ λυπηρόν ἐστιν); I know that the teaching of our fathers and the mystic formulas of the Dionysiac rites, the knowledge of which we who are participants share with each other, prevent you from believing them (οἶδ' ὅτι κωλύει σε πιστεύειν ὁ πάτριος λόγος καὶ τὰ μυστικὰ σύμβολα τῶν περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον ὀργιασμῶν, ἃ σύνισμεν ἀλλήλοις οἱ κοινωνοῦντες).[43]

Highly relevant to our topic is that Plutarch describes the adherence to a philosophical position such as that of the Epicureans in terms of believing. Despite the attempt of the Epicureans to persuade others of their view

[42] Plu., *Consol. ad ux.* 610B–D.
[43] Plu., *Consol. ad ux.* 611D.

of death, Plutarch's wife, he asserts, cannot believe them. Philosophical convictions, thus, are a matter of persuasion and belief. Similarly, at the end of his letter to his wife Plutarch also describes their own adherence to the Platonic view of death as something they "believe in". Having just invoked the laws which according to Plutarch:

> … forbid us to mourn for infants, holding it impiety to mourn for those who have departed to a dispensation and a region too that is better and more divine[44]

Plutarch concludes his letter as follows:

> And since this is harder to disbelieve than to believe (ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ ἀπιστεῖν χαλεπώτερόν ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἢ τὸ πιστεύειν), let us keep our outward conduct as the laws command, and keep ourselves within yet freer from pollution and purer and more temperate.[45]

Hence, both philosophical positions, the Epicurean and the Platonic, are something one believes in and is persuaded by. This is highly relevant here because the post-Enlightenment mind-set too readily construes an opposition between πίστις on the one hand and philosophical conviction and knowledge on the other, especially with regard to New Testament literature. Even Liddell-Scott-Jones offer a distinct, so-called theological meaning of πίστις, opposing faith to sight and knowledge with reference to 1 Cor 13.13 and other passages. Although πίστις is indeed opposed to sight in 2 Cor 5.7, it would be very tendentious to reduce the many contrasts of faith and knowledge in 1 Cor 13 to a pair of fundamental opposites. Comparison with Plutarch shows that it is incorrect to differentiate between the many classical meanings of πίστις, which are allowed to vary depending on the context, and a specific theological, Pauline meaning. The passage from Plutarch shows that philosophical convictions can also be the object of belief. Moreover, what causes Plutarch's wife not to believe the Epicurean views (but to adhere instead to the Platonic views) is the ancestral teaching (ὁ πάτριος λόγος) and the mystic formulas of the Dionysiac rites (τὰ μυστικὰ σύμβολα τῶν περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον ὀργιασμῶν).

We have already encountered the importance which Plutarch attaches to the ancestral and ancient faith in his *On Love* (756B). What is remarkable here is that according to Plutarch the philosophical position in which he and his wife believed is also motivated by their initiation into the mysteries—to be more precise, the mysteries of Dionysus, the god who was intensely

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[44] Plu., *Consol. ad ux*. 612A; See Plato, *Lg*. 904C–D.
[45] Plu., *Consol. ad ux*. 612A–B.

linked with the realm of the dead and the expectation of an afterlife. It is for this reason that Plutarch mentions the Dionysiac mysteries in his consolatory letter to his wife. The experiences of these mysteries, apparently, strengthen their philosophical convictions and beliefs. Also relevant in this context is what Plutarch says elsewhere about the initiation into the mysteries in relation to an assurance about the existence of an afterlife. Those initiated into the mysteries become convinced that there is an afterlife, and enriched by this experience they also become aware that the uninitiated masses do not believe in this other world. They are characterized ἀπιστίᾳ τῶν ἐκεῖ ἀγαθῶν (by a lack of belief in the blessings of the other world):

> … he surveys the uninitiated, unpurified mob here on earth, the mob of living men who, herded together in mirk and deep mire, trample one another down and in their fear of death cling to their ills, since they disbelieve in the blessings of the other world.[46]

Both passages thus make it clear that the mysteries are concerned with an experience of the existence of an afterlife, that the non-acceptance of this is called ἀπιστία (unbelief), and that the initiation into the mysteries can dissuade one from believing in the Epicurean view of death. In this way, belief, mysteries and philosophical conviction are mingled in a way which cannot be easily disentangled through a post-Enlightenment approach.

Plutarch applies the notion of πίστις not only with regard to the Platonic-Epicurean controversy regarding the afterlife, but also in very different philosophical discussions. This notion is also at stake when the very question of who qualifies as a true philosopher is discussed. Plutarch raises this question in his oration *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander*. According to Plutarch, the criterion with which to answer this question does not concern whether someone has written something:

> … it is obvious that Alexander wrote nothing … And yet even Pythagoras wrote nothing at all, nor did Socrates, nor Arcesilaüs, nor Carneades, who were all most notable among philosophers … Whence, then, comes our belief that they were true philosophers? (πόθεν οὖν ἐπιστεύθησαν ἐκεῖνοι φιλοσοφεῖν;) Surely from what they said, or from the manner of life which they led, or from the principles which they taught (ἀφ' ὧν εἶπον ἢ ἀφ' ὧν ἐβίωσαν ἢ ἀφ' ὧν ἐδίδαξαν). By these criteria let Alexander also be judged! For from his words, from his deeds, and from the instruction which he imparted, it will be seen that he was indeed a philosopher.[47]

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[46] Plu., fr. 178 (*apud* Stobaeus 4.52.49).
[47] Plu., *De Alex. fort*. 328A–B.

Thus, the claim that someone is a true philosopher is a matter of belief and trust, neither of which are blind, but rather are dependent on the words, deeds and instruction of such men. This very much reminds us of those passages in which Plutarch talks of believing in Homer on account of his great wisdom.[48] Against this background, I would suggest that the many passages in Paul's writings about "belief in Christ" should not be taken to reflect a specifically religious belief in Christ. Rather, what is at stake here is the trustworthiness of a particular figure as reflected in his words, deeds and instruction.[49]

Finally, within a philosophical context, Plutarch also discusses the issue of πίστις when he explicitly focuses on the compatibility of πίστις and philosophy. We have already gained an impression of this discussion from a passage discussed above, in which Plutarch stated that "our faith gains an added strength and dignity whenever the doctrines of Pythagoras and of Plato are in agreement with what is spoken on the stage or sung to the lyre or studied at school".[50] As we have seen, this is part of Plutarch's strategy to save faith from the fables about and misrepresentations of the gods in poetry. It is Plutarch's intention "to induce a revolt and revulsion of faith from such poetry" (35F). Through this process, faith is strengthened and acquires further dignity. This discussion of the relationship between poetry, faith and philosophy also comes to the fore in other passages, among others, in his *On Love*. As we have seen, Plutarch criticizes Pemptides here for questioning the divinity of Eros and accuses him of "altogether violating our inviolable opinion regarding the gods when you demand an account and proof of each of them".[51] According to Plutarch, "our ancestral and ancient faith is good enough" and "a basis, as it were, a common foundation

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[48] See Plu., *Qu. conv*. 627E; *Sept. sap. conv*. 164D.

[49] This is also apparent in the gospels, which, as examples of the genre of ancient biographies, are concerned with portraying the words, deeds and instruction of Jesus. This holds particularly true for the Gospel of Matthew which, as an example of a specific hermeneutical ancient biography shows the mutual confirmation and coherence of Jesus' words and deeds. According to Matthew, such harmony is missing from the Pharisees, who reveal themselves to be hypocrites. For the gospels as ancient biographies, see C.H. Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?: The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia 1977); C.H. Talbert, "Biography, Ancient", *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1 (1992) 745–749 at 748 and 749 on Matthew and the hermeneutical function of some ancient didactic biographies; R.A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Grand Rapids ^{2}2004). For the similar intentions of Paul and the gospel writers in emphasizing the trustworthiness and exemplarity of Christ in his words and deeds, see particularly Burridge, *What Are the Gospels*, 305–306.

[50] Plu., *De adulat*. 35F.

[51] Plu., *Amat*. 756A–B.

of reverence towards the gods",[52] which should not become debatable or questionable because of sophistic and atheistic inquisitions.[53] Although, as noted above, Plutarch's notion of πίστις seemed to be rather fideistic here, this impression was not confirmed by our exploration of other passages in Plutarch's writings. Moreover, further on in his *On Love*, Plutarch shows that his views on πίστις are compatible with particular philosophical positions. According to Plutarch:

> … our belief (πίστις) in all our notions, except those derived from the senses, comes from three sources: myth, law, and rational explanation; so it is undoubtedly the poets, the legislators, and thirdly the philosophers who have been our guides and teachers in what we think about the gods. They are alike in stating that gods exist; but they hold widely varying views about their number and rank, as well as their nature and function.[54]

Plutarch adduces this argument because, despite their divergence, all three factions, as he calls them, agree about the divinity of Eros. In this way, Plutarch finally responds to Pemptides' challenge, although he presents the argument in a "detour"[55] through a specific discussion with Daphnaeus, another partner in the dialogue:

> … the three factions who theorise about the gods are at variance: they differ in their votes and find it difficult to accept each other's candidates. Yet there is one god about whom all firmly agree. The most eminent of poets, legislators, philosophers, join together in enrolling Eros among the gods … So we see Love chosen as king, chief magistrate, and harmoniser by Hesiod, Solon and Plato.[56]

The belief (πίστις) in the very notion of the gods thus also derives from the myths of the poets, the laws of the legislators and the rational explanations of the philosophers. Hence, "the belief" in them is based, Plutarch argues, on the concordance of the most eminent poets, legislators and philosophers, such as, Hesiod, Plato and Solon, respectively.

This view on the harmony between faith and philosophy is also expressed in another discussion, in which Plutarch criticizes both the materialism of Democritus and Epicurus on the one hand, and the monism of the Stoics on the other, while embracing a particular form of dualism himself which accounts for both the bad and the good being present in reality. Plutarch

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[52] Plu., *Amat.* 756B.
[53] Plu., *Amat.* 756C–757C.
[54] Plu., *Amat.* 763B–C.
[55] Plu., *Amat.* 764A.
[56] Plu., *Amat.* 763E.

claims that this form of dualism is already voiced by the poets, legislators and philosophers of old:

> … this very ancient opinion comes down from theologians and from lawgivers to poets and philosophers; it can be traced to no source, but it carried a strong and almost indelible belief (τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀδέσποτον ἔχουσα, τὴν δὲ πίστιν ἰσχυρὰν καὶ δυσεξάλειπτον),[57] and is in circulation in many places among barbarians and Greeks alike, not only in story and tradition but also in rites and sacrifices, to the effect that the Universe is not of itself suspended aloft without sense or reason or guidance, nor is there one Reason which rules and guides it by rudder, as it were, or by controlling reins, but … we may assert that … [Nature] has come about, as the result of two opposed principles and two antagonistic forces … The great majority and the wisest of men hold this opinion: they believe that there are two gods, rivals as it were, the one the Artificer of good and the other of evil. There are also those who call the better one a god and the other a daemon, as, for example, Zoroaster …[58]

Although Plutarch's plea for dualism over against materialism and Stoic monism is irrelevant for our present purposes, the passage shows that in Plutarch's view theologians, poets, lawgivers and philosophers can reach agreement in their views on the gods, and that their concordance produces "a strong and almost indelible belief (πίστις)". He may well call this belief "strong" because he regards it as an example of faith, which as we have seen in another passage gains "an added strength and dignity" when it is confirmed by the doctrines of the philosophers.

For this reason, I believe this paper to have established that Plutarch's notion of faith is not fideistic, despite some suggestions to the contrary. In addition, it also belongs to the domain of philosophy—as we have seen particularly in the present section—and for that reason often occurs together with philosophical and cognitive vocabulary. Not only can philosophical doctrines confirm expressions of πίστις, but particular philosophical views are also the object of faith and are, conversely, reinforced by initiation into the mysteries. Faith and philosophy are thus interrelated. Moreover, as the previous sections have shown, "faith" is not the only, straightforward meaning of πίστις. The notion of πίστις is deeply rooted in the relational sphere of trust and is also at home in the domain of rhetorical persuasion.

Against this background, it seems that the often fideistic understanding of πίστις in Pauline studies and its monopoly in reconstructions of Pauline theology need to be corrected. It does not seem correct to list various mean-

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[57] F.C. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, V (London–Cambridge 1969) 109 renders πίστις as "conviction".

[58] Plu., *De Is.* 369B–E.

ings of πίστις—which are reflected in our discussion of its occurrence in Plutarch—with precision in LSJ (1408), while a presupposed theological meaning, according to which "faith" is opposed to sight and knowledge, is reserved for the Pauline writings (I.4). The same applies to the terminology of the mysteries. While in several passages in Plutarch we have seen that the mysteries and belief and disbelief are closely associated (*Consol. ad ux.* 611D; fr. 178), it is incorrect to separate Christian "mystery" as it occurs in Paul's writings from these other mysteries, interpreting the former as a "secret revealed by God, i.e. religious or mystical faith" (LSJ 1156 sub I.4; emphasis mine). Further comparative research into early Christian and ancient philosophical notions, values and virtues might show that, in many respects, they are more closely related than a modern, anachronistic understanding of the difference between philosophy and religion seems to allow.

THE COLORS OF THE SOULS

Israel Muñoz Gallarte

A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu: voyelles,
Je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes:
A, noir corset velu des mouches éclatantes
Qui bombinent autour des puanteurs cruelles,

Golfes d'ombre; E, candeurs des vapeurs et des tentes,
Lances des glaciers fiers, rois blancs, frissons d'ombelles;
I, pourpres, sang craché, rire des lèvres belles
Dans la colère ou les ivresses pénitentes;

U, cycles, vibrements divins des mers virides,
Paix des pâtis semés d'animaux, paix des rides
Que l'alchimie imprime aux grands fronts studieux;

O, suprême Clairon plein des strideurs étranges,
Silences traversés des [Mondes et des Anges]:
—O l'Oméga, rayon violet de [Ses] Yeux!

A. Rimbaud, *Voyells* (1871)

Could Plutarch be considered a precedent of the so-called "New Age"? Could perhaps the anonymous author of the *Apocryphal Acts of John* (*AJ*), be it Lucius Carinus or someone else, be considered that way? A simple google search allows us to find hundreds of web sites that, under the title "What color is your soul painted" offer us an allegedly serious and complete study of our soul's chromaticism for a relatively low prize. The aim of the present article is not to determine the survival of Plutarch in the current New Age, neither to wonder whether Plutarch could make a living by analyzing the souls of his fellow citizens. Rather it intends to explore the conception regarding the colors of the soul, as it emerges both from the *AJ* (28,6–29,19) and the Plutarchean *De sera numinis vindicta* (565C–E).

Even though previous studies widely analyzed the numerous points of contacts between Middle-Platonism and Early Christianity, not a single mention pays heed to the similarities between both passages.[1] Admittedly,

[1] See H.D. Betz, *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden 1975); idem, *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden 1978).

as Hans Dieter Betz points out,[2] "because of the quantity and complexity of issues to be taken into account, a complete description of the similarities and dissimilarities between Plutarch's dialogue and Early Christian Literature is a difficult task". It is therefore worthwhile to dwell some time upon these similarities.

The *AJ* is an Early Christian text probably composed in the second half of the second century that belongs to the so-called *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*.[3] Even if there is no certainty regarding the primitive text, scholarly consensus accepts the existence of several textual strata in its current textual form. The passage we will deal with today, however, is included in the *Apocryphal Acts of John* by Pseudo-Prochorus, preserved in manuscripts R and Z,[4] and might belong to the original account.[5]

Our text begins with the apostle's travel that takes him from Miletus to Ephesus,[6] where John meets Lycomedes and his wife Cleopatra. After some vicissitudes, which include the resurrection of both personages, Lycomedes embraces Christianity and becomes a fervent follower of the apostle.[7] His veneration is so strong that Lycomedes pays a painter to make a portrait of John in order that he may be able to constantly behold the apostle and revere him.[8] When the apostle John sees the finished portrait, gets

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[2] K. Ziegler, *Ploutarchos von Chaironeia* (Stuttgart [2]1964) 850 (= "Ploutarchos von Chaironeia", *RE* XXI (1951) cols. 635–962); Ph.H. De Lacy & B. Einarson, *Plutarch's Moralia*, VII (London–Cambridge 1984) 170–299; E. Des Places, *La religion grecque dieux, cultes, rites et sentiment religieux dans la Gréce antique* (Paris 1969) 272; H. Almqvist, *Plutarch und das Neue Testament* (Upsala 1946).

[3] See E. Junod & J.-D. Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, II (Brepols–Turnhout 1983) 682–687, 689–700; see K. Schäferdiek, "The Acts of John", in W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha*, II (Cambridge–Louisville [3]2003) 152–212; see J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford 1993) 306. For a complete bibliography on this topic, and also others, see P.J. Lalleman, "Bibliography of *Acts of John*", in J. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of John* (Kampen 1995) 231–235.

[4] Ms. R is preserved in the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian (Patmos) and has been dated to the sixteenth century. In spite of its rather late date it preserves several passages of an older manuscript, maybe proceeding from the tenth century; ms. Z, dated to the same century as R, is preserved in the Library of Santa Maria delle Grazie (Milan); see Junod & Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* I, 15–17.

[5] However, the theory has some difficulties, see Junod & Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* I, 18–25; See J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 304; K. Schäferdiek, "The Apocryphal Acts of John", 156–157; H.-J. Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. An Introduction* (Waco 2008) 16.

[6] See *AJ* 18.

[7] See *AJ* 19–26.

[8] In the same way that Lycomedes requires a portrait from his revered master, Plotinus'

disappointed about the result. In his view, whereas it pretends to represent himself, in fact it only depicts an external appearance. In this context, John pronounces the following words:[9]

> But do you be a good painter for me, Lycomedes. You have colors, which he gives you through me, that is, Jesus, who paints us all for himself, who knows the shapes and forms and figures and dispositions and types of our souls. And these are the colors which I tell you to paint with: faith in God, knowledge, reverence, kindness, fellowship, mildness, goodness, brotherly love, purity, sincerity, tranquility, fearlessness, cheerfulness, dignity and the whole band of colors which portray your soul and already raise up (…) which cure your bruises (πληγὰς) and heal your wounds (τραύματα) and arrange your tangled hair and wash your face and instruct your eyes and cleanse your heart and purge your belly and cut off that which is below it; in brief, when a full blend and mixture of such colors has come together into your soul it will present it to our Lord Jesus Christ indelible (ἀνέκπλυτον), well-polished (εὔξεστον) and firmly shaped (στερεόμορφον).

At first sight, the apostle's objection points to the obvious difference between both the material and spiritual realities, by stressing the higher value of the latter over the former. A closer reading, however, shows that this section of the *AJ* also offers a whole description of the origin, present condition and destiny of soul, in which we may distinguish the following steps:

a) God or Jesus provides human beings with a range of colors whereby they should paint their souls during their earthy existence.
b) These colors represent the virtues by means of which the human soul may recover its original balance, presumably lost due to the influence of external reality, namely by the passions arising from it.[10]
c) The restitution of the soul's pristine balance is metaphorically described as a healing of wounds (πληγάς and τραύματα),[11] and as a cleaning and washing of the soul.
d) This in turn opens the possibility for the soul to supersede the influence of the material world.[12]

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followers Amelius pretended to possess a portrait of his teacher, but Plotinus refused to sit for a portrait, see Porph., *VP* 1.5–2; also H.J. Klauck, *Apocryphal Acts*, 21.

[9] See *AJ* 28,6–29,19. English translation by K. Schäferdiek, in Schneemelcher, *NTA* II, 176.

[10] See P.G. Schneider, *The Mystery of The Acts of John. An Interpretation of the Hymn and the Dance in Light of the Acts' Theology* (San Francisco 1991) 35.

[11] This description is very common in *AAA*; for example, see *ATh*, c. 34 and 67.

[12] The brief mention of the castration of the young boy has been traditionally interpreted as an encratite defense of castration. However, given that other sections of *AJ* rather denounce than endorse castration (see John's criticism, in c. 54, of the parricide's castration), it seems more reasonable to interpret these lines not physically, but spiritually. In fact, they

e) Eventually, the individual should return his soul intact to its creator, that is, pure and stainless as he originally received it.

As far as the list of virtues included in our section is concerned, the text includes a total of fourteen and when compared to other lists of virtues in Early Christian texts, they do not present remarkable differences. Previous scholars have thoroughly analyzed them and pointed to parallel lists of virtues proceeding from the Stoa, from the Cynics, from Jewish "wisdom", or from "apocalypticism" and the question regarding their origin is probably unanswerable.[13] It is however interesting to note that even though our section of the *AJ* mentions both colors and virtues, it does not attempt to relate the former to the latter. Also interesting is the lack of any reference whatsoever to the opposite of these virtues, namely the vices or passions of the soul and their correspondent chromatic equivalences.

Let us now analyze other interesting aspects of John's argument.

1. *God as Painter of Souls*

As far as the simile of God-painter of souls is concerned, Junod & Kaestli[14]—following Festugière[15]—consider it a common place in Early Christian Literature. The following review of parallels will help us to contextualize the meaning of the *AJ*'s passage.

To begin with, the *Gospel of Philip*[16] (c. II), a Gnostic-Valentinian writing preserved in the corpus of Nag-Hammadi,[17] includes a description of God as "dyer",[18] who paints human beings with his divine colors. The metaphor can also be found in several tracts of the *Corpus Hermeticum*[19] (c. II–III)

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oppose physical and spiritual realities and defend the necessity of "cutting off" sensible reality. See Junod & Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* II, 455 and n. 2, who refer to Origen, *Com. in Cant*., prol. GCS 33, p. 65,15–66,8 and *Dial*. 15,11–22,9 for a parallel view.

[13] Junod & Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* II, 454 highlighted, however, the couple πίστις-γνῶσις with parallels in *AJ* (26,11; 113,18–19), and the group ἀταραξία-ἀφοβία-ἀλυπία-σεμνότης that, according to A.-J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermes Trismégiste*, IV (Paris ^{2}1983) 232, n. 3, it belongs to "Hellenistic lists".

[14] See Junod & Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* II, 453 and n. 2.

[15] See Festugière, *La Révélation* IV, 232–233.

[16] See Schneelmelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* I, 182–183.

[17] *Gos.Phil* (NHC II, 3) 51,29–86,19. Nag Hammadi papyri preserved in Coptic Museum, Department of Manuscripts, inv. 10544 (Cairo); see H.-M. Schenke, "The Gospel of Philip", in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* I, 181–182.

[18] See *Gos.Phil* (NHC II,3) 61,12–20.

[19] See *Corpus Hermeticum* V 8; XIV 8.

that describe God as an artist, either as sculptor of statutes of humans (ἀνδρίαντα) or as a painter of the whole creation. Also, in a Gnostic context, the Valentinians of Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–211/216) seem to have used the image of God as a "Painter".[20] The simile, besides, is also frequent in orthodox Christian writers of the second and third centuries of our era. Thus, Hippolytus[21] (ca. 170–236) uses the metaphor of the Son as painter in order to explain how sensible reality was marked by his divine essence, and Origen[22] (ca. 185–254) describes the Son of God as "the painter". Finally, Methodius[23] († ca. 311) alludes to God as creator and painter of whole physical world, made in likeness of the eternal and intelligible realm.

Given the frequent use of the simile in Christian context, it is baffling not to find parallels in pagan contemporary literature.

2. *The Colors of the Soul and Their Ethical Values*

But let us focus now on the main theme of our enquiry, namely the colors of the soul. In point of fact, Plutarch provides a very interesting parallel to the *AJ* that will be of help in understanding the background of this view. Indeed in his *De sera numinis vindicta* (565C–E) Thespesius describes his vision of the other world:

> "(scil. I [Thespesius]) Observed," he said, "in the souls that mixture (ποικίλα) and variety (παντοδαπά) of colors: one is drab brown (ὄρφνινον), the stain that comes of meanness (ἀνελευθερία) and greed (πλεονεξία); another a fiery blood-red (αἱμωπόν), which comes of cruelty (ὠμότητος) and savagery (πικρίας); where you see the blue grey (γλαύκινον), some form of incontinence (ἀκρασία) in pleasure (ἡδονή) has barely been rubbed out; while if spite (κακόνοια) and envy (φθόνος) are present they give out this livid green (ἰῶδες καὶ ὔπουλον), as ink is ejected by the squid. For in the world below, viciousness puts forth the colors, as the soul is altered by the passions and alters the body in turn, while here the end of purgation and punishment is reached when the passions are quite smoothed away and the soul becomes luminous (αὐγοειδή) in consequence and uniform in color (σύνχρουν)".[24]

Thespesius' last words show that, in Plutarch's view, souls acquire a distinctive chromatic range depending on the affections to which they are prone.

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[20] See Clem.Al., *Strom*., 4.13.90. For the Valentinians, see also E. Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: the Church of the 'Valentinians'* (Leiden 2006).

[21] See Hippol., *Haer*. V 17.

[22] See Or., *Hom. in Gen*. XIII; *Hom. in Lc*. VIII, 2.

[23] See Meth., *Symp*. 1.4; 2.1; 6.2; 8.13.

[24] English translation by P.H. De Lacy, *Plutarch's Moralia*, VII (London–Cambridge 1984) 281–283.

As a result of its life in the world of nature, the soul is under the continuous pressure of externals and the subsequent passions. After the death of the material body and during the soul's ascent to the region between the earth and moon, these colors become visible, revealing in this way faults, which must be cleansed in order for the soul to recover its pristine brightness and chromatic homogeneity.

Differently from the text of the *AJ* analyzed above, Plutarch does provide a list of equivalences between colors and passions:

> Meanness and greed → Drab brown
> Cruelty and savagery → Fiery blood-red
> Incontinence in pleasure → Blue grey
> Spite and envy → Livid green[25]

In spite of the seeming differences between the *AJ* and Plutarch, a closer reading reveals similar conceptions of the human soul. It is true that whereas *AJ* focuses on virtues, given by Jesus through John as colors, Plutarch instead refers to the soul's contact with vices and the marks that they

[25] The bibliography on the issue is scarce and mostly focused on one or more colors: L. Pelletier-Michaud, *Coleurs, lumière et contrastes chez les lyriques grecs et les élégiaques latins* (Québec 2007), affirms that fiery blood-red, "rouge écarlate, ou rouge sang", symbolize whether the noble death in combat, or in a pejorative sense a kind of horrible death. In fact, it is associated commonly with sorcery, a feminine domain tinctured by mystery; see 154–155, 160. In both cases, death and violence are common elements, what could explain its relationship with cruelty and savagery in our text. See furthermore A. Pociña, "Κόκκινος *coccinus*: vaivenes de un adjetivo de color, I", in F. Lambert (ed.), *Mélanges V. Bejarano* (Barcelona 1991) 111–120; J.R., Vieillefond, "Note sur πορφύρα, πορφύρεος, πορφύρω", *REG* 51 (1938) 403–413; R.J. Edgeworth, "'Saffron-colored' terms in Aeschylus", *Glotta* 66 (1988) 179–182; A. Grand-Clement, "Histoire du passage sensible des Grecs à l'époque archaïque: Homère, les couleurs et léxemple de πορφύρεος", *Pallas* 65 (2004) 123–143. Regarding blue, it is misleading that, as Pelletier-Michaud asserts, the color is used almost exclusively by Latin authors, in whose works it symbolizes "l'infidélité et le sentiment de jalousie" (156); see also P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Studies in Greek Colour Terminology* (v. I: γλαυκός; v. II: χαροπός) (Leiden 1981); A. Perotti, "Sur les adjetifs γλαυκός, γλαυκώπις", *LÉC* 57 (1989) 97–109; H. de Ley, "Beware of Blue Eyes! A Note on Hippocratic Pangenesis (*AER.*, ch. 14)", *AC* 50 (1981) 192–197. Green in turn is associated with *locus amoenus* and in this sense it is related to vigor, freshness and youth, which contrast both with the views in our text and, as we will see below, with most of ancient conceptions out of Greek archaic lyric. However, it is noteworthy that the pale color, sometimes in relation with green (χλωρός), is the color of "l'amant qui souffre, car la passion que le consume est perçue comme une véritable maladie", which could explain the relationship between spite and envy with green; see R.J. Edgeworth, "Sappho *fr.* 31.14L–P: ΧΛΩΡΟΤΕΡΑ ΠΟΙΑΣ", *AClass* 27 (1984) 121–124. About the color brown, see R.J. Edgeworth, "Terms for Brown in Ancient Greek", *Glotta* 61 (1983) 31–40. I would like to thank prof. D.F. Leão for providing me information and comments on this interesting point.

produce on the souls. Nevertheless, given the relationship between virtues and vices and that they both are related to colors, the similarity appears to be obvious. In this way both texts similarly conceive of the soul like a canvas on which its owner paints colors derived either from virtues or from passions. Most importantly, *AJ* and *De sera* present a very similar view of the human soul and its sojourn in the world of nature. In both passages the soul is conceived of as presenting a state of original pureness, homogeneity and brightness that is likely to be distorted by its contact with the world.

As far as the soul's interaction with the world and the means to counteract it is concerned, they also present clear similarities. According to *AJ*, the color-virtues neutralize the influence of passions. According Plutarch, passions confer upon the soul their characteristic color, in this way coloring the soul with impurity. In this juncture, *AJ* advises man, firstly, to achieve the balance of virtues-colors in the soul; and, secondly, to maintain its stability in order to return it pure to God, such as he received it. Plutarch, in turn, says that human beings must achieve a balance in order to avoid the subsequent purifications by the moon. Therefore, they may avoid further reincarnations in order to definitely ascend as pure nous to their destiny in the sun.[26]

It is interesting that in both texts the soul's exchange with the material world produces either colors or impressions, in this manner allowing an external spectator to reconstruct the steps it followed during its life. The remote inspiration of these passages seems to come from Plato's *Gorgias*,[27] in which souls are said to preserve signs both of their physical and ethical shortcomings.[28] According to Plato "when a man's soul is stripped bare of the body, all its natural gifts, and experiences added to that soul as the result of his various pursuits, are manifest in it". Besides, Plato's *Republic* also described souls coming from their earthly life as "full of squalors (αὐχμοῦ) and dust (κόνεως)", which makes indispensable their purgation before the next reincarnation, in order that they might descend in processional order from heaven clean and pure.[29] Regarding the simile between colors as marks

[26] In Plato's opinion, however, only philosopher who has spent his life in an absolute pureness achieves the ideal state in order to supersede the process of reincarnations; see F.E. Brenk, "The Origin and the Return of the Soul in Plutarch", in idem, *Relighting the Souls* (Stuttgart 1998) 25–42, at 30, and n. 11.

[27] See Pl., *Grg*. 524B–525B.

[28] This concept appears similarly in a long list of ancient authors: Plu., *De fac*. 945A, [*Vit. Hom*.] 123; Porph., 79.18, 297.21, 301.8 Smith; Lucian, *VH* II, 12; D.L. 8.31 (ascribing this theory to Pythagoras' school) and 33 (to Antisthenes).

[29] See Pl., *R*. 614D–E. The mistakes that provoke this state in the soul are exposed in *R*. 615B–C.

of earthly nature, Plato also refers, in the famous discourse of Diotima,[30] that there exist some "colors of humanity", which are in a clear opposition with the pure and unmixed nature of the Beautiful. Therefore, he who desires to achieve knowledge of the Beautiful should try to get rid of them: "if someone got to see the Beautiful itself, absolute, pure, unmixed, not infected with the flesh and colors or any other great nonsense of mortality".

But turning now back to Christian context—the setting in which, following scholarly tradition, the simile of God as a soul painter should be placed—we have an interesting parallel from Origen that presents contacts both with the approaches of the *AJ* and of Plutarch, as Junod & Kaestli point out.[31] In his *Homily on Genesis* Origen includes the following passage:

> You yourself paint that picture in yourself. For when lust has darkened you, you have brought in one earthly color. But if you also burn with covetousness you have blended in also another color. And also when rage makes your blood red you add no less also a third color. Another shade of red is added also of pride and another of impiety. And so by each individual kind of malice, like various colors, which have been brought together, you yourself paint in yourself this "image of the earthly" which God did not make in you. For that reason, therefore, we should entreat him who says through the prophet: "Behold I blot out your iniquities as a cloud, and your sins as a mist" (Is 44,22). And when he has blotted out all those colors in you, which have been taken up from the reddish hues of malice, then that image which was created by God shines brightly in you. You see, therefore, how the divine scriptures bring in forms and figures by which the soul may be instructed to the knowledge or cleansing of itself.[32]

Once again Origen presents the chromatic range humans must avoid, which means that he presents the colors as passions or affections. God as painter did not create this palette. They simply proceed from the individual and more specifically from the passions his or her soul may adopt during its present life.[33] The text does not provide more information as to God's role

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[30] See Pl., *Smp*. 211E. During the discussion that followed this communication some colleagues highlighted the importance of colors in Plato's conception of soul as a chariot (*Phdr*. 246D–248D) with two horses, one of them black and white, representing the irrational and rational parts of the soul, respectively.

[31] See Junod & Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* II, 453–454.

[32] See Origen, *Hom. in Gen*. XIII. English translation by P. Schaff, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 4. *Fathers of the third century: Tertullian, Part Fourth; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen, Parts First and Second* (Grand Rapids 2006).

[33] For a similar conception, see Philo, *De opif. mund*., 25.78: "In all these one might rightly say that there was the real music, the original and model of all other, from which the men of subsequent ages, when they had painted the images in their own souls". Similarly, Ps.-Philo,

or as to the colors and their eventual relationship with the virtues, but it is plausible to think that there is an "image of the heavenly" opposed to the "image of the earthly" referred to in the text. As for the ways of purifying the soul of the chromatic accretions related to passions, Scripture is the most important way during this life, but God may also intervene to restore the original image the soul had, namely its bright and pure pristine nature.[34]

According to Origen, the colors produced by passions are the following:

> Lust → brown
> Greedy → darker brown as result of being burned (maybe close to black)[35]
> Rage → blood red "third color"
> Pride and impiety → another shade of red

Origen—roughly contemporary of the *AJ*'s author and born sixty years after Plutarch's death—presents interesting common issues with the texts we have dealt with. To begin with, we refer to visible parallels in the conceptions both of the soul and of the colors. Also the description of the soul's original condition and the purification it must achieve appear to be equivalent. When comparing Origen to Plutarch similarities are even more conspicuous. We can see indeed the predominance of exactly the same colors, namely brown and red, which in both authors are related to the same affections, to wit greed and rage or cruelty, respectively. At the same time, the list of passions included in both is rather similar. With the exception of impiety, appearing in Origen, and envy, mentioned by Plutarch the lists are equivalent.

In any case, all three texts defend an ideal of human life, in which virtue plays a central role in rinsing the souls from the signs caused by passions, in order to recover the pristine state of purity. All passages also describe the soul's state previous to incarnation in a rather similar way, paying special attention to visual issues: "indelible, well-polished and firmly shaped" (*AJ*),

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The Rebellion of Kora, 16.5, presents the simile of human being-painter of his own soul and of God as the painters' teacher: "just as a painter does nor produce a work of art unless he has been instructed beforehand, so we have received the Law of most Powerful that teaches us his way".

[34] The color white (Pelletier-Michaud, *Coleurs*, 153–154) has been always related to good feelings, such as purity, virginity, peace, quietness, etc. In fact it was traditionally the color of God and his manifestations; see D. Tarrant, "Greek Metaphors on Light", *CQ* 10 (1960) 181–187.

[35] See Pelletier-Michaud, *Coleurs*, 154 n. 24, where he concludes that black is obviously the opposite of white, and therefore symbolizes both the human existence and death.

"luminous (...) and uniform in color" (Plutarch), and, finally, bright and "cleansed" (Origen).[36]

Within a strictly Christian context, scholars explain the conception of the colors-virtues of the *AJ* by means of God's "true" or "good colors"–ἀληθινοί or ἀγαθοί—of the *Gospel of Philip* referred to above:

> As the good dyes, which are called "genuine", "dye" (only) with the (materials) which were dyed with them, so it is with those whom God has dyed: since his dyes are immortal, they (also) become immortal through his medicines.[37]

According to Festugière, through these colors God transfers his divine essence to human beings in order to create a "homme noveau".[38] Junod & Kaestli think these colors are the same as those in the *AJ*.[39]

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[36] In Plato the souls are conceived as a ray of light, and "their 'thinners and diffuseness' becomes 'firm and translucent' ", see Brenk, "The Origin", 40.

[37] *Gos.Phil.* (NHC II,3) 61,12–20. J.E. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Philippe* (Paris 1967) 159–160, editor and translator of *Gos.Phil.*, also points out the Platonic background of this passage, but without mentioning any text. E. Segelberg, "The Coptic-Gnostic Gospel according to Philip and its Sacramental System", *Numen* 7 (1960) 189–200 at 192, establishes a relationship between the act of dying and baptism, based on the above mentioned *GosPhil* (NHC II,3) 61,12–20. However, J.E. Ménard (see above) rightly remarks that water is transparent.

[38] See Festugière, *La Révélation* IV, 232.

[39] See Junod & Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* II, 453, n. 1. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Philippe*, 159–160, highlights as the clearest formulation of this conception preserved in work of Zosimos of Panopolis (c. III–IV)–referred to by Festugiére, *La Révélation* I, 277–279. In his work Zosimos explains that God creates two kinds of "genuine dyes" and then brings them into two kinds of demons, who distribute them among men, depending on their moral conduct. The former group of dyes, coming from wood—in fact they are called "sandy" and linked with the color brown of wood, and also of earth—, should be under control of those demons whose activity is voluntary, and consequently they can stop keeping free will on their decisions. The latter corresponds to those demons whose activity cannot cease and that are under the direct control of God. About their tints, namely "genuine dyes", Zosimos affirms that Hermes supposedly wrote in a stele: "melt only one that is green and yellow, red, the color of the sun, pale green, ochre-yellow, green or black and the rest of them". This conception of Zosimos, in Menard's opinion, might be traced back to the Peratae; see Hippol., *Haer.* V 17.4: "and the difference of colors, and the dissimilarity which flowed from the rods through the waters upon the sheep, is, he says, the difference of corruptible and incorruptible generation". Finally, in Ménard's view, the inspiration of the simile colors-passions would come originally from Plato's *Phaedrus* 110B–E, where the author supposedly stress the differences between earthly colors and the colors of intelligible world, the latter being "authentic", and the former, mere copies of them. See *Gos.Phil.* (NHC II,3) 53,14–23; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1,6,1; Clem.Al., *Exc. Theod.* 51–52.

Moreover, even if Plutarch mentions this passage in several points of his *Moralia*—see Plu., *De gen. Socr.* 590C–F, *De fac.* 934D–F; see Brenk, "The Origin", 37–38—, attesting the survival of these concepts in the first and second centuries, in none of Plato's passages arises the simile of colors-passions, as appears, instead, in the mentioned texts of *AJ*, *De ser. num.* and Origen.

As to the origin of the motif, Junod & Kaestli propose that the inspiration of the simile of colors-virtues comes from Gen 1,26: "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness". In their opinion *AJ* share "la théologie de l'image" that we also find in the passages referred to above (pp. 237–238) by Origen, Hippolytus and Methodius.[40] As we already mentioned, they refer approximately in the same terms either to the Son or to God as a painter.

However, in spite of the interest of Festugière's and Junod & Kaestli's emphasis on the theology of the image, it does not completely explain the use of the simile as we find it in *AJ* and in Plutarch. Admittedly, man is created according to God's image and likeness and he is consequently endowed with God's virtues. Herewith he should be able to cope with earthy reality without being altered and to preserve his divine values untouched. However, do Gen 30,37–39 (Hippolytus) and Gen 1,26 (Origen and Methodius) really offer a plausible explanation regarding the origin of the simile of the colors-virtues? I think they do not.

To begin with, the theology of the image cannot explain why colors may reflect the soul's bad condition as due its contact with the world. Nor does it explain why the colors-virtues should work as an antidote against the work of passions. In order to explain this aspect we must take into account a view of virtues and passions as opposing and counteracting one another, a view that perhaps should be related to conceptions of the soul that distinguished rational and irrational parts within it. Therefore, it seems more plausible to understand the passages of the Church fathers' and of the *AJ* as an echo of the platonic conception that we find in Plutarch, which they adapt to a Christian context by providing it with a Scriptural foundation. In this conception, the soul was seen as painted by his creator with true and pure colors; due to its life in a hostile environment, however, the soul tends to acquire alien colors as results of affections or passions arising within it. By means of virtues or rational control the soul is able to counteract the influence of the external world, by neutralizing first its noxious action and by preserving, secondly, the recovered balance.

The chromatic equivalents of passions have a long tradition in Greek culture. Homer, for example, can describe Agamemnon's heart "black with rage";[41] Sappho became "paler than summer grass" out of jealousy[42] and Suda defines envy as "A human sickness of the soul and [one] eating whatever

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[40] This topic may also be rooted in a philosophical environment; see Porph., *Ad Marc.* 33.

[41] See Homer, *Il.* 1.103–104: μένεος δὲ μέγα φρένες ἀμφιμέλαιναι / πίμπλαντ'.

[42] See Sapph., fr. 31, vv. 14–15 Voigt: χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας / ἔμμι.

soul it seizes" and describes its activity "just as rust [eats] iron".[43] Note in addition that the theory of the four bodily humors of the *Corpus Hippocraticum* also establishes a clear relationship between psychology and physiognomy. According to these views, even the color of bile could explain the affective qualities of the individual, as follows:

> Black bile → despondent, sleepless, irritable
> Blood → courageous, hopeful, amorous
> Yellow bile → easily angered, bad tempered
> Phlegm → calm, unemotional[44]

Plutarch himself also provides enough testimony to this relationship between colors and passions in another passage, but now focusing on physiology and physiognomy rather than on theology:

> Pain, greed for gold, or jealousy will cause a man to change color, and wear away his health. Envy, which naturally roots itself more deeply in the mind than any other passion, contaminates the body too with evil. This is the morbid condition that artists well attempt to render when painting the face of envy.[45]

It is time to draw some conclusions. It seems that both pagan and Christian authors of the second and third centuries widely attest the use of the simile of the colors of the soul in a theological-eschatological context. In both contexts, the simile intended to reach the same goals. On the one hand, it illustrated God's creative activity and shaping of the human soul; on the other, it provided the parameters by means of which the soul's ethical behavior might be established since the colors that the soul acquired during this life determined reward or punishment in the afterlife. Within this purpose, authors resorted to physiological and psychological conceptions widespread in the Greco-Roman worldview,[46] in which Platonism exerted a special influence.

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[43] See Suda, φθόνος s.v.

[44] About the colors black and red, see above in n. 25 and 35.

[45] Plu., *Qu. conv*. 681E. English translation by P.A. Clement & H.B. Hoffleit, *Plutarch's Moralia*, VIII (London–Cambridge 1969). S.T. Teodorsson, *A Commentary on Plutarch's Table Talks*, II (Gothenburg 1990) 206–207, points out that "no paintings of this kind are extant. They may perhaps be compared with a kind of caricatured terracotta figurines dated 4th and 3th c. BC" which are preserved in numerous European museums.

[46] Even though we restricted our focus to Greek milieu, there are numerous parallels in other cultural environment. Thus, for example, in Indian Jainism, according to which the moral value of the human activity—and correspondingly also the kind of karma which they bind—, each soul or *lesya* presents a different color, as follows: black, dark, grey, fiery-red, lotus-pink or white; see D.V. Glasenapp, *Doctrine of Karman in Jain Philosophy* (Varanasi

Christian uses of the simile, however, do present some development, since authors give the metaphor a new framework. In their search for an "authoritative foundation", they resort to the Scriptures, and more specifically to the verses of Genesis that refer to God's creation. By focusing excessively on this "authoritative foundation", previous studies on the issue have failed to place the simile in its proper context, as a result of which, neither its origin nor its goal could be properly determined.

I think Plutarch's testimony, with its similar conception and parallel views, provides the proof both of the previous existence of the motif in Platonic milieus and of the fact that, when blending it with Genesis, Christian authors were resorting to the same cultural heritage.[47]

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[2]1991) 47–48; K.L. Wiley, "Colors of the Soul: by-Products of Activity or Passions?", *E&W* 50 (2000) 348–366. Thanks to my colleague Raul Concha Grau for turning my attention to this interesting point.

[47] I would like to thank Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta and Jan Bremmer of the University of Groningen for their useful references and for their kind correction of this paper.

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